THE LAND OF THE LITTLE COLONEL

ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON

THE LAND *of* THE LITTLE COLONEL

REMINISCENCE AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

By

ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON

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ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON

THE LAND OF THE LITTLE COLONEL

Reminiscence and Autobiography

in which the Author tells of her Pioneer Family, her Childhood Days, how she happened to write her First Book, her Meeting with the Old Colonel and his little Granddaughter, who inspired the writing of the famous LITTLE COLONEL books, of her days "In the Desert of Waiting" and her Life at "The Beeches" in Pewee Valley — "the land of the LITTLE COLONEL"

BY

ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON

AUTHOR OF THE LITTLE COLONEL SERIES,
THE JEWEL SERIES, JOEL: A BOY OF GALILEE, ETC.

ILLUSTRATED
FROM ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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TO
MY BELOVED DAUGHTER
MARY

AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

THE ILLUSTRATIONS IN THIS BOOK ARE FROM ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE ACTUAL PEOPLE AND PLACES THAT INSPIRED MANY OF THE CHARACTERS AND INCIDENTS IN ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON'S WORKS. IT IS WITH THE GRACIOUS PERMISSION OF MISS KATE MATTHEWS OF LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, THAT WE ARE ABLE TO REPRODUCE THESE PICTURES, AND WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE OUR APPRECIATION OF HER COURTESY AND GENEROSITY.

THE PUBLISHERS.

AN APPRECIATION

By

ALICE HEGAN RICE

WITH every generation of girls comes a best beloved story-teller, one whom they select above all others to be their leader into the enchanted land of make-believe. For many years Louisa M. Alcott held the high honor but, with her gracious passing, came the necessity for another guide.

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the language of the children themselves I should say: "Mrs. Johnston remembers and understands." Into maturity she has carried an amazing recollection of her first shining impressions of life, quite undimmed by the wear and tear of the intervening years. She sees youth, not through the telescope of time, but through its own radiant eyes, and, having seen, she understands and interprets it to itself.

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ALICE HEGAN RICE.

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I

OUT OF THE PAST

THE LAND *of the* LITTLE COLONEL

I

OUT OF THE PAST

THE Land of the Little Colonel, like "all Gaul," is divided into three parts. One lies in the State of Kentucky, one in the Country of Imagination, and one in the dear demesne of Memory.

A thousand times have I been asked, "Is Lloydsboro Valley a real place?" and this is always my answer: You will find it on the map of Oldham County under the name of Pewee Valley, but you will never find it now along any road whatsoever where you may go on pilgrimage, for the years have stolen its pristine charm and it is no longer a story-book sort of place.

But thirty years ago, wandering down its shady avenues was like stepping between the covers of an old romance. One had only to stroll past the little country post-office to feel the glamour of the place and meet a host of interesting characters. In those days the post-

office was little more architecturally than a magnified dog kennel, but at nine o'clock of a summer morning it was the social centre for an animated half hour or more.

The smart equipages of summer residents were drawn up in front of it. Old family carryalls loaded with children in care of their black mammies joined the procession, and pretty girls and their escorts on horseback drew rein in the shade of the locusts arching the road.

One half expected to find "Mars' Chan" and "Meh Lady" among them, for the families represented here were sprung from the old Virginia stock and showed their birth and breeding both in feature and in charm of manner.

There was much visiting back and forth among the carriages while they waited. Picnics and parties were planned, invitations given and accepted, recipes exchanged and gossip passed from group to group.

A stranger seeing the gay assemblage for the first time would conclude that all the world was on a holiday. Even the village seamstress, going to her day's work, had a holiday air as if she expected to be asked, "Where are you going, my pretty maid?" for she was followed by a beautiful Jersey cow, which she was taking for an outing in the thick grass of her employer's

THE OLD COLONEL

yard. The stranger would be told that Miss Lil' always took her cow along in the summer, and the information would be added that Miss Lil's great-great-grandfather was one of the early governors of Kentucky.

Along this street one summer morning, nearly thirty years ago, came stepping an old Confederate Colonel. Every one greeted him deferentially. He was always pointed out to new comers. Some people called attention to him because he had given his right arm to the lost cause, some because they thought he resembled Napoleon, and others because they had some amusing tale to tell of his eccentricities. He was always clad in white duck in the summer, and was wrapped in a picturesque military cape in the winter.

This morning a child of delicate flower-like beauty walked beside him. She was pushing a doll buggy in which rode a parrot that had lost some of its tail feathers, and at her heels trailed a Scotch-and-Skye terrier.

"She's her grandfather all over again," remarked a lady in one of the carriages, "temper, lordly manners, imperious ways and all. I call her 'The Little Colonel.' There's a good title for you, Cousin Anne. Put her in a book."

It was out of that remark that the first volume of the series grew. It was not intended then that there should be more, but when the

"Two Little Knights of Kentucky" was begun, the same child danced across its pages and put herself into the story. Later when publishers and a juvenile public demanded to hear more about her, the characters in the "Gate of the Giant Scissors" joined the group of their own accord and proposed a house party at Locust. They have always been so intensely alive to me that when correspondents demand "Are they real?" I feel justified in saying yes. If they haven't all lived as and where the stories depict, they have at least lived in somebody's personal experiences and Memory shows them many a time, trudging through the scenes of my own past.

The same wild rose, that reached through the graveyard fence to wave to me on my way to school, waved to Betty as she left the Cuckoo's Nest for the house party at Locust. The same "rosebud sash" which delighted Mary Ware's soul delighted mine when I was Mary's age.

It has been a matter of interest to me to note that the questions are asked again and again by my readers like an insistent refrain: "How much is really true? What are their names in real life? Are you Betty?"

It has been impossible to reply adequately to those questions in the pile of letters that have come to me in the last quarter of a century, and I am offering this short biography,

hoping that it will satisfy the curiosity of my correspondents more fully than letters can do.

Another question is, "How did you happen to begin writing?"

To answer that I must go back to my mother's girlhood and tell her story first.

II

THE CHAIR THAT WENT TO COLLEGE

II

THE CHAIR THAT WENT TO COLLEGE

THERE is still in existence a little splint-bottomed chair which we children used to venerate as "the chair that had been to college." Low and comfortable, it was the one in which I usually elected to sit at story-telling time, so that in that way it became associated with all the tales my mother told us, as well as the Great Adventure of her pioneer girlhood in which it had a part.

The story of how she took that chair to college along with other furniture and household goods, several feather beds, a few sisters and brothers and a cousin or two, was the story of a Great Adventure, because it was in the early days before the time of railroads in that part of the country, and half of the journey was by canal boat and half by stage-coach. Also it was in the days when girls did not do such things; when college doors were not open to women.

The great majority of those who won college diplomas won them as did those who gained the heavenly palm branches. It might be

written over them also, "These are they who came up through great tribulation."

She never told it to us all at once in a straight unbroken narrative, as one would follow the course of a river, but we saw when we were grown and could correlate the experiences which led up to it that all these little events were the feeders, the springs and streams which made the river inevitable.

So much has been written of the hardships of the early settlers that one is apt to get the impression that they were as rough as their bare log cabins and as limited in their outlook as our Kentucky mountaineers; but in the three states of the Middle West of which I have personal knowledge, Indiana, Illinois, and Kentucky, the great number of their first immigrants were from the best families in the older states, and were accustomed to the refinements and comforts of an established civilization.

For instance, my mother's grandparents left Maryland because for conscience's sake they had freed their slaves and then found it impossible to continue the old régime without them. They moved to Kentucky first, amid the protests of the family who stayed behind.

"Poor Anne Eleanor," they mourned, "moving out into that wilderness. She'll never know comfort again."

So they stitched and knit and filled a chest

with extra lamb's wool clothing for her to take into that far country of the "dark and bloody ground," praying heaven that she would not be scalped, but predicting openly she'd be sorry she had not kept her slaves even at the risk of an accusing conscience.

But poor Anne Eleanor had the spirit of the true Pathfinder. While she appreciated their prayers and the provision for her comfort, she resented their criticisms and their prophecies, and gathering her baby in her arms she rode off beside her husband, her head held high. She was determined to wrest something out of the frontier life which would compensate them for all they were leaving behind. Her children should be brought up to serve their day and generation as worthily as if they had stayed on in the old states, no matter how much greater her efforts must be to accomplish that end.

It was the dauntless spirit which actuated all those who turned their faces westward in those days, seeking greater opportunities; and in this case, as in many others, was passed on as a heritage even to the second and third generations. That vow was one of the causes of that little splint-bottomed chair finally reaching college, for the baby over which it was made was my mother's mother.

Our gallant-souled great-grandmama had a

hard time in carrying out her program. She did not begin to see any results until they moved once more, this time into Southwestern Indiana, where they blazed a trail through its unbroken forest and built a new home on the edge of the clearing. In this new environment they found congenial neighbors, for families were counted neighbors in that sparsely settled region if they were within fifteen miles of one's roof-tree.

Some of them were English, some Scotch. One Scotch-Irish family, the Erskines, had been lured to this country by reports from the New Harmony colony, settled by Robert Owen, who had been a friend of the family in the Old World. So they, too, bore with them the tastes and traditions and customs of an older civilization. They had not expected to find such a wild country as the one which confronted them that bleak Christmas day of 1812, when the flatboats on which they had travelled down the Ohio River landed them at the crude little settlement of Evansville.

There were Irish linens and laces in the big iron-bound chests, some silver plate and some books; and the outfitting, which later found its way to a farm eight miles inland, was more suitable for cities than for the rough work of the clearings. But this great-grandfather was as game as the other one. Of Scotch Cove-

nanter stock, his people had lived in Ireland long enough to get a twinkle in the eye and another in the tongue, which he passed on to his sons. I mention this merely because one of these sons married the girl that had been carried out of Maryland as a baby. They were my mother's parents.

Life began for her in a log house with the most primitive of furnishings, oddly at variance with the few cherished possessions brought over in the old chests. There were nine children. Joseph came first, then my mother with only two years between. It was necessary for her to begin thinking of others when she should have been in the nursery herself. At four years of age she took it as a matter of course that she should help take care of the child next younger. Once lifted into the cradle, she could keep it rocking by swaying herself from side to side. She could sing to him that old hymn of Dr. Watts,

> "Hush, my dear, lie still and slumber
> Holy angels guard thy bed."

She could be trusted to sound the alarm if older hands were needed. Many a time she wanted to be lifted out of that cradle that she might vary the monotony of nursing by watching the interesting home industries going on about her: the soap-making, the candle-

dipping, the spinning, etc.; but she was made to understand that all these activities would be interfered with if she did not do her part. So she stuck to her task, a little Casabianca of the cradle. Thus they taught Duty in those days, duty with a big D. But it made a little woman of her at four, a little mother.

We loved to listen to reminiscences of these times, and she doled them out to us on various occasions for the purposes for which Scripture is said to be given, "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that we might be thoroughly furnished unto all good works"; but incidentally they revealed her character in the making and the forces which molded it.

For instance, when she found the sugar bowl empty and my little sister's pockets stuffed with lumps which she was throwing to the chickens when surfeited with sweetness herself, she illustrated the sin of wastefulness with a page from her own history. When *she* was a little girl they bought sugar only once a year. It had to be brought all the way from New Orleans on flatboats, the brown kind of sugar in hogsheads, and the white in big loaves; and if even one person wasted it so that the supply did not last through the year, the whole family had to suffer. They simply had to go without till the next year's supply was brought up the

"THE LITTLE COLONEL" AND "MOM BECK"

Mississippi River, then the Ohio, and hauled home by the slow-going oxen.

In order to point her moral of "waste not, want not," she drew such a graphic picture of those weeks of sugarless meals, that she not only touched our tender consciences but she left an indelible impression on our minds of the Spartan endurance which pioneer days demanded of children.

When we grew fidgety in church and on one awful occasion overstepped proprieties to such a degree that we had to be tied to a bed-post for a whole hour afterward, the punishment was somewhat mitigated by the story which accompanied it. She did not intend to mitigate it. She was drawing a comparison only to shame us

They didn't have any houses of worship when she was a child, or any nice pews with backs to them. They had to hold services at her grandfather's house, that being the largest in the community, and then only a few times a year when an itinerant minister came that way. They were so glad to have even that kind of church that they sent a messenger on horseback to all the surrounding farms; and the neighbors came from far and near, so many of them they could hardly crowd into the house. The only way they could provide seats for so many was to make benches of long slabs

of wood, hewed flat on the top side, and her grandmother brought out all her patchwork quilts and folded them along these rough benches. There they sat through two sermons, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, nearly two hours long, each of them, and they were glad to do it, even with no backs to their benches.

This picture of pious endurance was somewhat spoiled by other facts elicited by our keen questioning. Each family brought a huge basket along, and there was a picnic dinner between the two sermons, supplemented by the hot food from great-grandmother's kettles and brick oven. Undoubtedly our mother's churchgoing was more of a gala affair than ours. Our kind was described years afterward by some verses that my little sister wrote, called "The Old Church":

"Its straight uncushioned seats how hard they seemed,
What penance-doing form they always wore,
To little heads that could not reach the text,
And little feet that could not reach the floor."

Especially was this the case when the minister talked about

"Some theme which, like the narrow windows high,
Took in the sky but left terrestrials out."

How infinitely diverting it was in mother's day when, if one were small enough, she might

creep into the trundle bed under the high four-poster and not emerge until the opening of the picnic baskets.

Sometimes she and Joseph stayed all night after one of these services, as did the minister, and they were allowed to sit up late to hear him tell wonderful tales of the land on the other side of the mountains where men went down to the sea in ships. He had known people who had been to the other side of the world, and he had been to college where he wanted mother's three young uncles to go.

I am telling this in a very disconnected haphazard way, but that is the way the story came to us, in piecemeal, just detached pictures of those winter evenings in that little log house in the clearing. The wolves howling in the surrounding forest, the log fire blazing within, with only its light and a tallow-dip candle to read by; but the zeal of this weather-beaten itinerant prophet, flaming up like a high white torch of inspiration, set his hearers' souls afire with a great yearning for better things. He had some wonderful books in his saddle bags, besides his Greek Testament and Murray's English Grammar, and the like. There was a little "Atlas of the Heavens," and as he brought it out to whet the appetites of the three half-grown lads already hungering and thirsting for an education, he little dreamed he was arousing

the ambition of the two small children in the chimney corner quietly playing with a kitten.

My sister and I could appreciate the pictures she drew for us better than our children could in their turn, because we came into the world just on the borderland of those pioneer times when some of its customs and conditions were still in existence. Living on the old farm she reproduced for us as far as possible her early environment. Once at sheep-shearing time, when we had watched a white flock give up its fleece, struggling under the deft hands of the shearers, she went up into the garret and found the identical carding combs on which she had once helped to card wool into reels ready for the spinning. And she showed us the old wheel on which she wound many a skein of yarn, and let us turn its clacking spokes just as she had done. It was like an interesting new game to wander about the place making all sorts of discoveries.

We saw the lye running out of the great ash-hopper and the soap-making that followed. We saw the white shining candles drawn out of the tin molds, we peered into the huge kettles swinging on the crane in the fireplace, both in apple-butter and lard-rendering time. We took vigorous turns at the churn-dasher, we helped dry apples and even quilted a few rounds on the gay patchwork quilt stretched

out in the long frames. We hunted the young turkeys that had gone astray, gathered eggs, wiped dishes, prepared vegetables, and helped carry supper to the hay-makers or set the table for the neighbors who came in to help in the wheat harvest and the threshing, and felt that truly the lines had fallen to us in pleasant places. We were having the same experiences that our mother had had in her girlhood, and we counted it great fun.

But there was this difference. We did only a few of these things in any one day, and because it was our amusement. She did it week in and week out, year in and year out, from sunup till sundown with little to vary the monotony. True, she rode to school on horseback, which was a pleasure denied us with the schoolhouse roof visible almost from our very doorstep. But school did not last more than eight or ten weeks then, and most of her studying had to be done at home between tasks. Often she learned her spelling lesson with the book propped up above the ironing-board or the dish-pan, or parsed sentences from "Paradise Lost," as she stirred a pudding for the wood-choppers who would soon be home to dinner.

Also there was another difference when she went through these tasks. There were no stoves when she was learning to cook. All cooking had to be done in the back-breaking old way

over a fireplace and in brick ovens. No sewing machines then. Every stitch was set in by hand, even the men's heavy clothing. All the hosiery was knit at home, all the dyestuffs made there, concocted from roots and berries gathered in the woods thereabouts. A travelling shoemaker came by once a year and made shoes for the entire family, but even that added to the work, for he had to be given food and lodging.

I am enumerating these things only to emphasize the fact that there was little time for day-dreaming in a day when one moment's duties trod hard on the heels of the next in a never-ending procession. But day-dreaming she certainly managed to indulge in, she and her brother Joseph.

Strange, when he was so intimately associated with everything she thought and did, when there was the most perfect comradeship existing between them, that she should have given us only two of her graphic word pictures of him. One is when he brought in a little clump of locust trees from the woods and planted them near the house, and the other is when he planted the vague hope and then the certain promise in her heart that she should go to college with him some day.

That last picture is a very distinct one; the two of them sitting on the back doorstep to-

gether in the starlight. He, an eager, half-grown lad, pointing out the North Star, the Great Dipper, and some of the other constellations he had learned about in his last visit to his grandfather's from one of the young uncles who was teaching school by this time, and the other who had an "Atlas of the Heavens" of his own now. He had walked all the way to the store at the river landing to buy it; had walked the sixteen miles beside a yoke of plodding oxen with a load of wood. He had sold the wood and come back not only with the Atlas but with a Murray's English Grammar, which he studied as he trudged the long furrows of the cornfield, with the book tied to his plow handles.

Joan of Arc, listening to the voices, had no brighter vision of her future than these two children on the doorstep, following the gleam of the stars. Fair blue-eyed boy and girl whose heritage was the high resolve to serve their generation wisely and worthily despite the handicaps circumstances had laid upon them.

"When you are eighteen," he said, "we will go."

But when she was barely eighteen her mother died, swept away suddenly by one of those epidemics that devastated those early settlements at times.

Meningitis it probably was, though not

known by that name then. Her neighbors, sorely smitten, had needed her to help nurse them, which she had done as a matter of course, but at the price of her own life.

Then a double duty fell on the shoulders of the eighteen-year-old girl. She had carried the load of eldest sister in a family of nine; now she must be mother as well, with the youngest just a baby.

Even then, after the first shock, she did not wholly give up her plans. She and Joseph sometimes found a moment to sit on the steps in the starlight and talk of the future. The fulfillment must be delayed, of course, but come it must some day.

She always hurried over this part in her telling, as if she could not bear to open the old grief, for he, too, was swept out of her life by a sudden swift illness; then for a long time it seemed as if Hope had died out of the world, as if the very stars had dropped out of their courses. No longer was there a gleam to follow, only work and more work, the meeting of a mother's problems with a girl's inexperience. It was awful sometimes, with no doctor nearer than fifty miles, and only home-made remedies at hand in emergencies. And then the baby died.

Several years went on in this fashion till one spring morning she woke to find the locust trees that Joseph had planted white with

blossoms. All day, as their heavy fragrance followed her at her tasks, she seemed to feel his presence, as if they brought some message from him. The old dreams awoke. She felt that she could not let them go for naught. They must be fulfilled because he wanted it so. Then the passionate resolve came to her they should be fulfilled for the others, all the younger brothers and sisters should have their chance for Joseph's sake, the chance he had craved for himself and her.

Now you see most of this story of her Great Adventure cannot be told, because there is no putting such things into words. The biggest part and the hardest part began right there, in the waiting and the effort to bend every one else to her plans; in persuading her father that it was necessary for the girls as well as the boys to have more of an education than the three months or so a year that the county schools afforded.

He was a considerate father for those days. Everything in the way of household machinery to lighten her labor he bought as soon as it was to be had, such as the first stove in that part of the country. There was always a woman to help when one could come, but the endless round of planting and harvesting, which meant extra work for the extra hands, went on through her teens and into her early twenties.

And too, there was always the constant effort to infuse her ambition into the younger children. They must be kept up to the highest notch both at home and at school, in order to be ready to go through the door of opportunity when it should be unlocked for them.

At last Providence seemed to open the way by sending some one who could assume many of her responsibilities and relieve her largely of her burden. That spring she went to her father and announced simply, "I'm going to college in the fall. I'll take the two oldest boys and Anne."

But her plans did not suit his. He was arranging to build a new house that summer. He needed the boys on the farm. There was still plenty of time for them. They were so young. She had a better education already than any young woman in that part of the country. She was nearly twenty-three then, and why not follow the career ordained by heaven for a woman, and be satisfied? She had had some tutelage at irregular intervals by a cultured Eastern woman, who had established a private school in the community.

The locusts were in bloom again. Maybe they helped her to answer as she did, "The building can wait until we get back. After the children have had their chance."

That fall two wagons took their way across

"KITTY AND ALLISON WALTON"—
MISSES KATHERINE AND FRANCES LAWTON

the country from the farm to the Wabash River. In one sat four young pilgrims to the Temple of Knowledge. In the other were the feather beds, the dishes, the trunks and home-made quilts, a bag of dried apples, much provender from garden and orchard. High on top with its mates rode the little splint-bottomed chair, new then and untried in the ways of the world, but ready for whatever might befall it.

At the Wabash landing the wagons were unloaded on to a steamboat, a wonderful experience for the four young people, none of whom had been more than twenty miles from home before. A young person to-day could start out alone around the globe with more assurance and self-confidence than they felt in walking the gang-plank of that steamboat that was to carry them into such new and totally different experiences.

The last half of the journey was made by stage-coach. There in the crude inland town of the early fifties they set up their household goods in several rented rooms. The boys split wood on the shares, thus storing up all they needed for the winter's use. I have a dim recollection of hearing something about a cow which they milked on the shares, a cow belonging to one of the professors. Sturdy and willing they shared all the household work with their sisters. Together they cooked and

washed and ironed and studied. Only at the portal of the wonderful Temple of Knowledge did they separate, two going boldly up the college steps and two slipping timidly in by the door of the Ladies' Seminary.

In those days of frugal living, in which the majority of the students were having a struggle to put themselves through the college course, this little home seemed a model of comfort and good cheer. If the little splint-bottomed chair could tell its memories, what a tale it would have of many a young fellow doing his own light house-keeping on a diet as slim as crackers and cheese, who found this home an oasis in his desert, with its hearty welcome and old-time hospitality, to say nothing of all the good eatables brought from the farm.

They had the best companionship that the faculty and student body afforded, and at the end of the year went back home in such high good spirits and contagious enthusiasm that the following year a still younger sister was added to their number, and two young cousins.

Years ago I met the historian, Ridpath, who told me more of their life at that time than I ever learned from my mother about it. He was a senior during her second year there. For more than an hour, while a party of us were waiting for a delayed train at a little railroad junction, he walked up and down the crossties,

a solemn, bearded old gentleman then, regaling me with tales of "Old Asbury," now De Pauw University, and the part my forebears had in making it memorable for him.

This second year they did not have to go over to the Wabash to start. The canal leading through the state to the Ohio River had been completed by that time, so they embarked nearer home and went the first lap of the journey by water. But when they reached the town where they were to take the stage-coach, there was a delay of a whole week. Something had happened to the horses or the line of coaches to tie up travel all that time. They did not mind the delay particularly. There were other students waiting also. Youth and high spirits can turn almost anything into an adventure. But afterwards they blamed their stay for a scourge of typhoid fever which broke out among the students, beginning with those who had been with them in that week of waiting. The water supply was thought to have been contaminated.

One of the cousins was the first to be stricken. He was a bright promising boy whose parents had thought him full young to go away from home. Then one of the younger sisters took it. Fortunately this year, owing to the increased size of their family, they had rented an entire house instead of rooms.

And now came what was always the greatest tragedy of those early days, sickness with no trained nurses to combat it, no knowledge of sanitation such as we now have, a poorly equipped medical staff to lean on. The whole town was involved. The well, both professors and students, took turns sitting up with the sick. They in their turn were smitten. This young cousin was one of the first to die, and to my mother's grief over the loss of a near and dear comrade and one-time playfellow was added remorse for having persuaded him to leave home.

By the time her sister had recovered, the winter was well over. So my mother's attendance at the Seminary was irregular and disappointing. But she made the most of it and, save for the sorrow which ever after shadowed her memory of that year, felt that the effort and sacrifice leading up to it had not been in vain. The younger children at least had had their chance.

Among the friends who came to help in the time of fever was a young theological student, Albion Fellows, who was tutoring his way through. The chronicle of his struggle for an education is the story of another great adventure. His family moved from New England to Illinois when he was only three. I can only say that he followed the same star that had led my

"THE LITTLE COLONEL" AND MRS. JOHNSTON

mother on her quest, with the same reverence and the same zeal, so it is no wonder that they arrived finally at the same goal.

At the end of the term that he was graduated and ordained, there was a quiet little wedding, and he took my mother away to fill a place for which there was none better equipped than she, a valiant spirit grown strong through much serving, and wide-sympathied through much giving of self. But despite all her new duties she would have thought herself unfit for the kingdom had she ever looked back after once putting her hand to the plow of that first great purpose. She never stopped in her efforts till the last one of her brothers and sisters, whom she had vowed to help, had been given an opportunity to make good.

The locusts that Joseph planted tower over the roof-tree now. They are brittle and gnarly and old, but every spring his youth lives again in their ancient branches, when they grow white and sweet with bloom. They serve to recall to me something my mother said as we stood looking at them. "I have always wanted to write a book," she said wistfully, "but the leisure has come too late. You must do it for me." With such a girlhood it is no wonder that she dreamed dreams for us children and set us adreaming also.

III

EARLY DAYS

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EARLY DAYS

With the blare of brass bands and the beating of drums came the great torchlight procession down the street. The waiting crowds broke into cheers, and lights sprang up along the line of march as if by magic. Houses were illuminated from garret to cellar. Sometimes an entire line of fence would be surmounted by a row of candles flickering in the night air. In some of the yards red lights were set ablaze continuously, and fireworks went up with a whiz to come down in a rain of golden sparks.

It was three years after the Civil War, and I, only five, was witnessing one of the most brilliant pageants that ever played a part in the political campaigns of Southern Indiana. Held by a watchful uncle, I leaned from an upper window and waved a little flag in each hand, cheering shrilly for Grant and all aquiver with excitement.

Transparencies like great lanterns went by. Zouaves passed and minute men in Revolutionary uniforms. There were country boys from

the adjoining township on nervous high-stepping horses. There were magnificent floats, there were hundreds and hundreds of flaring torches, and over all the continual rain of golden sparks from fireworks.

But it is for none of these that I remember the scenes so vividly after all these years. Not for the Goddess of Liberty, who rode past with flowing hair and golden crown and rows of children at her feet singing "Hail Columbia." It was for the fact that on that float went by my best white dress and I was not in it. I had not been allowed to ride with the goddess, although I had been specially invited; but my dress had been loaned to the little neighbor who took my place. It was bad enough to be deprived of the glory of riding with the goddess, but to see some one else flaunt by in my beloved frock was more than I could endure without utter heartbreak. I remember how trivial and insufficient my mother's reasons seemed. The horses might become frightened and run away. The gossamer dresses of the girls might be set ablaze by the torches or fireworks. A cold might lurk in wait for those who rode so thinly clad in the autumn night air. Take it all together, a torchlight procession was not a thing for a five-year-old girl to have part in. So I was kept at home, weeping and rebellious.

This is my first memory of tears, for my earlier recollections are singularly happy. They are of the house in the country to which we moved when I was two years old, after the death of my father, a young minister; of lying on the grass looking up at the sky through boughs of pink peach blossoms; of lullabies in the summer dusk with one tiny waxen taper on the high mantel-shelf and fireflies flashing past the open door.

This house was on my grandfather's farm, not far from Evansville. We lived there two years, returning to the city when I was nine. Then my mother decided to locate permanently in the country, and built a house within a stone's throw of the old homestead, where her eldest brother was living and just across the lane from another brother. So with my two sisters and myself there were eight of us cousins to visit back and forth. My sister Albion has described it in her book "Beauty for Ashes."

"Here on a ridge of hills the families dwelt in a little community of its own like a highland clan upon its own peaks. No streets had McCutchanville. It was scarcely a hamlet since it had not even a store, and its post-office was Squire Mack's private sitting-room where the mail was brought once a week. It was simply a scattered settlement having two foci, the church and the schoolhouse. Its laws were the

ten commandments, the golden rule, and the customs of the fathers.

"We shared the household tasks since there were no servants. Certain respected and highly valued neighbors came to clean or do washings but the humdrum round of every day was divided by the family."

It ceased to be humdrum, however, done to the accompaniment of songs and declamations. As Albion and I washed the dishes together we sang continuously or recited long poems in unison. The churn-dasher thumped in time to the spirited rhythm of Lord Marmion's quarrel with Douglas; dishes rattled to the tune of Twickenham Ferry; bed covers were flipped into place as we recited, turn about, "The Lady of Shalott" or Whittier's "Snowbound."

Every now and then Albion would dart into the dining-room where a long blackboard occupied one wall at just the right height for little arms to reach. From the time she was seven she kept it filled with portraits and pictures, often illustrating fairy tales and verses of our own manufacture.

My mother taught me to read when I was five. I have only one recollection of these lessons, and that was given one busy morning because I followed her around insisting upon it. She stopped sweeping, and taking me on her lap pointed out the words with her scissors.

When I reached the point where I could read the simple lessons in my First Reader, I was so proud of the accomplishment that I insisted upon following her about the house to practise it. With one hand holding the book and the other tightly clutching her skirts lest she elude me, I was whisked upstairs and downstairs and in my lady's chamber, for she never paused in her tasks at such times and I was fain to prove the truth of Scripture, that "he may run that readeth."

It was about that time that my ambition to write was vaguely aroused. There was a "piece" in my Reader beginning:

> "Hark! The children gaily shout.
> Half past four and school is out."

I used to repeat it over and over as I stood at the window watching the children go tumbling past on their sleds, in the red glow of the winter sunset. There was something in the poem that I cannot see now. It seemed then like a masterpiece, and I remember wishing that I had written it. About this time an old English woman, a protégé of my mother's, used to come to the house selling tea and magazines. I had been encouraged to subscribe for a tiny magazine called The Children's Hour, and it was always a proud moment when I climbed up and fetched down a little

inlaid workbox in which I kept my savings to pay for the magazine each month.

It was always understood between my mother and myself that some day I was to write stories for The Children's Hour.

After that magazine we had the Little Corporal, then the St. Nicholas and the Youth's Companion. But we had few children's books, so we were forced to turn to the periodicals of our elders, The American Agriculturist, Harper's Weekly, The Monthly and The Christian Advocate. In that last named there was always a page of children's stories which I devoured eagerly, and then read the column of obituaries, taking a lively interest in its record of last words and funeral texts.

Of Harper's Weekly I remember best the wonderful cartoons Nast was making for the Grant and Greeley campaign, and of The Monthly what Dickens and Wilkie Collins were contributing to it. My sister Lura read the serials aloud in the summertime when she was home from school. She was an omnivorous reader and could tell a tale like "The Fall of the House of Usher" till delicious little shivers would course up and down one's spine. All that we read or heard we passed on to the cousins with whom we played, just as Betty told tales to Davy at the Cuckoo's Nest.

We gathered much from my father's theo-

logical library, for amid such dry picking as "Harmony and Exposition" were "Foxe's Book of Martyrs," "Æsop's Fables," "Pilgrims Progress," and many bound volumes of The Ladies' Repository. Here, too, we came for the poets, yards and yards of whose verse we learned to repeat around our daily tasks. Later, many copies of Godey's lady books found their way into the house. They were given to us that we might cut out the colored illustrations for paper dolls, but we discovered the sentimental love stories and read them eagerly.

My cousin Wilbur, a boy just five months older than I, came into possession of some hair-raising Indian tales which I read aloud to him one autumn. I often stayed to supper at his house, reading both before and after. I remember the clock always struck eight just at the most blood-curdling places. I would be afraid to go home and he would be afraid to take me. But eight o'clock was my curfew hour and I dared not dally if I wanted to be allowed to go again. We always ran the short distance down the lane from his door to mine, feeling that at every step a tomahawk might descend upon our shrinking scalps or an arrow come hurtling through the trees.

There was one more source of literature, and that was some two score volumes in a little red bookcase in one corner of the church. It

is the same library that Betty read in the "Little Colonel's House Party."

Many of them were about unnaturally good children who never did wrong and unnaturally bad children who never did right. At the end there was always the word MORAL in big capital letters, as if the readers were supposed to be too blind to find it for themselves and it had to be directly across their path for them to stumble over.

It held all that was left of a scattered Sunday School library in use a generation before. Queer little books they were, time-yellowed and musty-smelling, but to us story-loving children, hungry for something new, they seemed a veritable gold mine.

The church, a bare wooden structure, stood in a grove of locusts and cedars, just beyond the end of our lane. Many an afternoon I spent reading in its straight hard pews with nothing to break the stillness but the cooing of a distant dove. Never was such stillness as that which wrapped that old meeting-house. I think of it when I hear the words, "The peace of God which passeth understanding."

Outside in the churchyard the tombstones were like old friends, we wandered among them so often, reading the epitaphs. There was one on which was sculptured a marble hand pointing to a text in a marble book:

A STREET IN LLOYDSBORO VALLEY

"Be ye also ready." On moonlight nights I could see the shaft from my bedroom window, but it never seemed gruesome or strange to live within sight of the churchyard. I always felt that Gray's elegy must have been written there.

Sometimes when the reading was done, we played on the little cabinet organ standing in the "Amen corner." We were learning to play the piano and took liberties with the church organ because we had played on my father's from the time we could reach the keys, one playing by ear while the other on all fours manipulated the pedals. If secular tunes as well as hymns floated out on the cedar-scented air, it was from no lack of reverence, but merely that being a minister's daughters, we felt as much at home in the church as we did in the house in Cherry Lane.

There was a flag carved on one of the marble headstones. That mute symbol was our greatest lesson in patriotism. The ten years since this hero of the Civil War had fallen in battle seemed a lifetime to us, and Memorial Day meant nothing to us until we happened to go to his mother's on the thirtieth of May. We found her surrounded by roses. There were great baskets of them heaped up all around her. She was twining them into wreaths and we stayed and helped. It was the first time we had

ever heard of Memorial Day. She brought out his canteen and his old army cap to show us. As we gazed at them, suddenly the war became a very real and personal affair and we began to comprehend in a dim way what sacrifices had been made.

The uncle who held me up to see the torch-light procession had been a Captain in the Northern army, and whenever I was allowed to touch with reverent fingers the sword that had been drawn in defense of our country, it always brought a peculiar thrill of exaltation that I have no words to express. A second cousin visited us one time who had thrilling tales to tell of his escape from Libby prison. So far, I had heard only one side of the story and was an ardent little Republican and Abolitionist.

I remember in one campaign there was a bit of doggerel very popular with us all:

"Grant rides a white horse,
Greeley rides a mule.
Grant is a gentleman,
Greeley is a fool."

There were bold spirits among us who shrilly retorted,

"*Greeley* rides a white horse,
Grant rides a mule."

But they were speedily ostracized.

Those of you who have read "Mary Ware in Texas" will recall how thrilled she was when she went to Fort Sam Houston. "As she saw for the first time these men who stood as the guardians of 'Old Glory,' everything she had ever read of heroism and blood-stained battle fields and glorious dying came back to her in a flood of enthusiasm which nearly lifted her to her feet. When at last the band struck into 'The Star-spangled Banner' and the guns fired the signal which heralded the lowering of the colors, her plain little face was almost transfigured with the exalted emotions of the moment."

I knew just how she felt.

IV
SOME PLAY DAYS

IV

SOME PLAY DAYS

"Wasn't it pleasant, oh brother mine,
In the old days of the lost sunshine
Of youth—when the Saturday's chores were through
And the Sunday wood in the kitchen, too,
And we went visiting, me and you,
Out to old Aunt Mary's?"

WITH us, as with Riley, it was the well-doing of those Saturday "chores" that made the afternoon visiting pleasant: dishes and beds, sweeping and dusting, cleaning lamps and silver, churning, shelling corn for the chickens, bringing in cobs from the crib for kindling, helping with the Saturday baking. My mother believed that a girl should know how to do everything around the house that had to be done, and like good old George Herbert she taught it in a way to

"Make drudgery divine.
Who sweeps a room as by thy laws
Makes that and the action fine."

It used to give me a satisfaction, and a virtuous feeling that nothing else could, to know that the Saturday chores were done and

well done, that my home lesson was on my slate in neatly arranged sums, and that freshly washed and dressed I was starting out to an afternoon of play.

When we moved to the country, there were eight of us cousins. When I left, there were twelve. That there was so little quarreling I think is due to the fact that we had so much to do that we appreciated our play-time. Usually we all gathered at one of the three houses, finding such companionship that we seldom cared to go to the neighbors'.

At my grandfather's was a girl who occupied the position of Little Orphant Annie. Molly was her name. She was much older than any of us and her tales were our delight. She used to gather us on either side of the long dining-room table, in the twilight, with one flickering candle in the middle, and tell us ghost stories. There was one about clanking chains and portraits with rolling eyes that fairly raised our hair. We would glance fearfully over our shoulders at the shadowy corners and start home with teeth chattering. On such occasions I used to run on ahead through the orchard and jump out from behind a tree at Albion, calling "Raw head and bloody bones!" for no other purpose than to frighten her still further.

But with the forgiving spirit of a saint she never told on me, never lost her temper. Years

"THE LITTLE COLONEL" AT THE MEASURING TREE

afterward, when I was evolving the character of Betty, it is no wonder that I made her like Albion. Like both my sisters, in fact. That is why Betty, though a composite character, is one of the most real in the books to me. She was so much like Lura and Albion. I had her look like Elizabeth Matthews of Macon, Georgia.

Our favorite place to play was in the enormous barn, a dangerous place with its trap doors and high ladders and hay press for baling hay. We used to drag each other up and down on the hay fork by means of its rope and pulley, so high that it would have been instant death had the rope slipped or our hold given way. The sweet-smelling mows made an ideal place to play hide-and-seek, and a game called "Barleybright." The children played it in "The Little Colonel's Holidays":

> "How many miles to Barleybright?
> *Three score and ten.*
> Can I get there by candlelight?
> *Yes, if your legs are long and light—*
> *There and back again!*
> *Look out! The witches will catch you!*"

The two delegated to be the witches would be led a merry chase up ladders and down, and daring leaps were taken in an effort to escape their clutches. Sometimes when the older boys were not with us, we played millinery store,

making hats of broad persimmon leaves pinned together with thorns.

On long summer days the great barn was the coolest spot on the farm, and here Mary Helen brought her baby brother in his carriage, and the two next older when it fell to her lot to take care of them, and we played school and had picnic lunches.

But better than any games was the taking part in whatever of the farm activities that happened to be in season. It may not seem very thrilling to children constantly entertained by such things as the movies, but to us it was joy to watch the sorghum-making; to have all out-of-doors smelling like molasses candy, while we sampled the sweets in the boiling vats, or took turns riding the old horse that turned the mill which ground the juice from the sugar cane.

Or there were the times when we rode in the high wagons through the orchards where the apples were piled up in ruby heaps, barrels and barrels of winesaps with their fruity smell. Then there was cider-making time, when the amber juice poured out of the press into our little tin cups. Or there was hay-making time, when we took supper to the men in the fields, spreading a tablecloth on the dry stubble, picnic fashion, and putting out a repast that would tempt the gods. Afterwards,

deserting Old Spot and the buggy that had taken us to the field, we would ride home on the huge wains of hay.

From sheep-shearing time until wheat-threshing was over in the autumn, there was always something of interest to watch.

Our greatest joy was the entertaining of guests. In the town only eight miles distant lived our three great-uncles and their families. The lad who had walked sixteen miles to buy an "Atlas of the Heavens" had been with his brother, a pioneer in the milling business, building up an industry worthy of their sturdy upbringing. The other brother had become an eminent judge. "Anne Eleanor's children," serving their day and generation so well that her ambition for them must have been satisfied. Lives that began amid the austere hardships of pioneer times had every comfort known to civilization. It was a delight for us to visit them in their homes, and it seemed a delight to them to come back to the simple life of the farm.

Rarely was there a week-end in the summertime when some of the uncles and their families were not our guests. As the shadows grew long on a Saturday afternoon, we began to watch for the sight of a carriage coming around the corner of the church. As soon as we saw the top of it, we raced madly up the lane to open

the big gate and ride down with whoever it might be.

If cousins of our own age were in the carriage, we were pleased; but we really enjoyed most our revered uncles and their wives. They had such a fund of amusing anecdotes and reminiscences that we followed them from one house to another fearful of missing a word. Not that we had anything to say ourselves. That children should be seen and not heard was a favorite saying in those days and we were careful to put it into practice.

In time, a new brick church replaced the old frame meeting-house, but the churchyard remained unchanged, and we often wandered through it on Sunday afternoons in lily time, or when spicy old-fashioned pinks bloomed on the graves or red birds sang among the blue berries of the cedars. It was such a cheerful, peaceful place that we often dropped down between the quaint headstones and mounds of periwinkle, and sat talking in the quiet spot until it was time for the usual Sunday "sing."

That was a family institution. Old and young gathered at one of the three houses, and standing around the piano sang for an hour or more; gospel hymns mostly, but ballads were not forbidden nor any classical instrumental music. By the time Wilbur was fifteen, he played the violin very creditably.

The guests who came were often a great addition to the Sunday concerts. One city cousin had a sweet well-trained voice, and another was a brilliant pianist. We loved music and "heaven came down our souls to greet," as we sang the old hymns with glad hearts and lusty voices.

One of my happiest memories is of the old singing school that met on summer nights, drawing the country belles and beaux for miles around. It was the great social event of the week. The first one was organized when I was just a small child, and met in the lodge room of the Odd Fellows. The later one met in the hall above the schoolroom. It was a community affair attended alike by the little folk and middle-aged men and women.

There was something festive about these occasions that glorified even the ill-smelling kerosene lamps. When it was over, smart side-bar buggies turned with a great scraping of wheels to dash down moonlit roads. Each wagon-load that passed the pedestrians was singing. Those on foot caught up the song like "Pilgrims of the Night." The whole countryside had the habit of song. Nights when there was a spelling bee, a quilting party, a singing school, or even the Literary, one wagon-load after another passed singing on its way.

The quilting party, survivor of pioneer times, had a custom which we always observed. When the quilt was done and the boys had come in to supper, they shook up a cat in the quilt. Every one present had a hand in the shaking. Of course the surprised cat would make a dash for liberty and the person toward whom it jumped was supposed to be the first one to be married. Once a cat, nervous and excited from having been shut up in a coop all day in order to be on hand when wanted, jumped full into the face of a young man and scratched him badly before getting loose. It happened that he was married soon after and the sign was regarded henceforth as infallible.

One Hallowe'en I was invited to a merry-making at a neighbor's. I was one of the youngest of the guests, and I am sure that if my mother had known the kind of frolic it was to be I would not have been allowed to go. No boys were invited, we were told.

It was a warm, witchy sort of night, lit by a pallid moon with clouds scurrying across it. We bobbed for apples, roasted chestnuts and tried the usual fortune-telling stunts. Then our hostess proposed that we have a stolen supper. First we set the table, pulled out to its full length in the dining-room. Each girl set two plates, one for herself and one for whomsoever fate might send. Then we

were paired off and given our instructions. Each couple was dispatched to a different neighbor's with orders to walk in without knocking, without a word go directly to the pantry, choose something to eat and carry it off, all in dead silence. Not a word must be said or the spell would be broken.

My partner and I were sent to the cabin of a little old Irish woman who always wore a white cap with a great frill around it. It seems she was the one who had suggested the prank to our hostess and she was evidently expecting us. There was nothing in her larder but eggs and potatoes but she smiled and courtesied and motioned us toward them with generous gestures.

We each took an egg and started back. The cabin was in the midst of a cornfield, and we went along a narrow path that led through it. It was a lonely sort of place. The ragged blades fluttered in the wind, and the moon was overcast now and then. Suddenly we saw a man coming toward us, staggering slightly.

"He's a drunkard," whispered Ella. Now I had never seen an intoxicated man and Ella's epithet seemed terrifying. We started to run, leaving the path and threading our way through the corn as best we could. For two little girls to be out at night alone in a cornfield was bad enough, but to be chased by a creature called

a drunkard was terrible. Even if he isn't chasing you, it is quite as bad if you think he is. It was like trying to run in a nightmare, when it seems as if leaden weights are tied to one's feet.

It was with a feeling of intense relief that we reached a hole in the fence and scrambled through to the familiar road with the lights of the house twinkling near by.

In a few minutes silent couples found their way back to the dining-room, one bearing a pie, one a cake, another some rolls, whatever they had been able to find. Solemnly they placed it in front of their plates, then sat down with their backs to the table, waiting for fate to send some one to fill the vacant chair beside each one.

The lights were turned down very low and we sat in silence a long time. Then the door was pushed softly open and a procession of ghosts filed into the room. They were wrapped in sheets and wore masks. We smaller girls were frightened. They circled round and round the table without a word, taking the vacant chairs. They were the boys who had not been invited, but had heard of our party and planned an affair of their own. The fun grew boisterous after that. At first I was aghast at what fate had sent me, but consoled myself by remembering that Ella and I had broken the

spell by talking when we saw the drunken man. Another thing made it seem improbable that the boy who sat down beside me was my fortune: we had not waited until midnight to try the spell. But for some time I was vaguely uneasy about it.

I mention the incident because it was one I wove into a story a few years later and sent to the Youth's Companion. I was bitterly disappointed when it was returned with the word "unavailable," but when several years later I came across the manuscript again I was thankful it had not been published. I could see for myself how crude it was. I had not exercised my imagination at all in the telling of it, but had simply put down the facts as they had happened.

V

"ALL IS VANITY"

V

"ALL IS VANITY"

EVER since my father's death Aunt Anne had made her home with us. Soon after our removal to the country she was married and went to Madison, Wisconsin, to live. It was a home wedding and the house was full of pleasant excitement for days. The bride's cake was baked by my great-aunt Susan, famous for her white cakes. This was an enormous one, iced by a caterer and brought out to the country by Liza Blue, who had been our cook in town and had come out to help with the festivities.

Liza had the cake in a large basket, duly packed with tissue paper and napkins, and spread over the top napkin was a delectable copy of the Youth's Companion. It was the first one I had ever seen. I disappeared with it into a hay mow in the big barn, more thrilled by its stories than by all the preparations going on for the wedding. From that time on for many years I was a constant subscriber.

The following fall Aunt Anne wrote for Lura to come and make her home with her and attend the University of Wisconsin. She did not come home the next vacation. Instead, Mother, Albion, and I went to her. It was the first overnight railroad journey I had ever taken and my disappointment was keen when I found we had passed from Indiana to Illinois without my knowing it. They were so differently colored on my map I had expected to find the same difference in reality.

It was a happy summer with much sailing and fishing on the lakes. We were so close to the park that the squirrels used to come over and steal the lumps of sugar from between the bars of the canary's cage, and we went often to see old "Abe," the war eagle. He had been the mascot of a Wisconsin regiment during the Civil War. While we never tired of hearing how he used to soar straight up into the air above the tumult of battle and scream when victory was certain for his regiment, I revered him most for his connection with The Little Corporal, that magazine best beloved in my childhood. It was the sale of his photographs which led to its establishment.

One day the keeper gave me one of his feathers which my uncle made into a quill pen, remarking that now I must write a book. Although I knew he was joking, the suggestion

carried weight when I thought of the potency of such a pen.

Looking back, I really think now that the only tears I shed in those days were on account of my clothes. My mother and I never could agree on that subject. Starting with the torch-light procession when a little neighbor borrowed my best white dress, it seemed to me that my liberty was always being curtailed. The summer I was ten there lay in the bureau drawer of the guest chamber at home a dainty white organdy made to wear over a slip of the palest green silk—sea-foam green they called it. Carefully wrapped in a box with many coverings of tissue paper was a pair of beautiful pale-green kid shoes to match. I had worn them only once and that on a visit to the city. Many a Sunday morning I wept bitter tears into the drawer at not being allowed to wear the costume to church.

"Just see how beautiful they are," I would say, caressing them with admiring fingers. "By the time I have another chance to wear them they'll be too small for me and I shall have to give them to Albion. I don't see why I can't wear them out here."

"Because they are not suitable," my mother would answer. "You would look over-dressed going through the fields and along the dusty roads among all the plainly dressed country

people. I hope my little daughter is too much of a lady to want to call attention to herself in that way, especially at church."

I would sob protestingly until my mother's decided voice would silence me. "Hush, Annie! Close the drawer at once. You can't wear them."

That would settle the matter for a while, but the scene was repeated several times during the summer. The last day of October came and no suitable occasion had arisen for me to wear them. Then Aunt Martha was taken violently ill in town and sent for mother. She went taking Albion with her and leaving me at Aunt Lou's in order that my school work need not be interrupted. I was to go home twice a day to feed the chickens.

On Friday afternoon an invitation came for us to spend the next day at the Harrison farm in the upper neighborhood at a sort of Hallowe'en frolic. When I brought in the eggs that evening and put them in the pantry, I was seized with a daring thought. I would wear my party dress and shoes.

"If we should try Hallowe'en charms," I said to myself, "and somebody should look over my shoulder when I was going down cellar with a candle, I'd be so glad if the first time he saw me I was all in white and green like the Princess Esmerelda."

ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON AT THE AGE OF NINETEEN

I went upstairs and pushed open the western window shutters. It was so still in the empty house that the loud ticking of the clock seemed to call me back. I clutched the handles of the bureau drawer and gave a jerk. It was locked. For a moment my disappointment was so great I wanted to cry. But instead I got up and began to search for the key. Under the rug, in the vases on the mantel, behind photographs, into every nook where a key could be hidden, I peered with eager eyes. Finally I climbed on a chair to the guest-closet shelf. While I did not find the key I found the next best thing, the box with the pale-green shoes.

"I'll wear this much of my party clothes anyhow," I declared, climbing down with my box in my arms. Then followed a long and fruitless search for the stockings that matched. They were not in the box with the shoes. They must be in the locked drawer.

I confided in my cousin Lottie, who was a little older than I, "I can't find a stocking except my red ones and some striped ones and some horrid old brown things."

"I'll lend you some white ones," said Lottie obligingly. "I have a pair of fine lamb's wool that are too small for me. We put them away to keep, because Grandma knit them after she was eighty years old."

"Then let's get them to-night and not say

anything about it till after to-morrow," I proposed. "Your mother might say that I oughtn't to wear the shoes, but my mother never said I couldn't wear them to a Hallowe'en party. She just said to church."

Opening a big chest in one corner of the room, Lottie began fumbling around among the piles of neatly wrapped winter flannels it contained, while I held a candle. Suddenly she exclaimed: "Here they are!" and as she unfolded them she sneezed so hard she nearly blew out the candle.

"It's the red pepper," she explained. "They're full of it to keep out the moths."

The next morning when I went home to feed the chickens, I carried the stockings with me and changed my shoes there. Afterward, I climbed into the big three-seated express wagon and sat there while the horses were being hitched to it and while the other children who were going assembled in the lane under the big persimmon tree. Aunt Lou came out to the gate to see us off.

"Tuck the laprobe around you well," she called. "If I had known it was so cold I'd have gotten out your hoods instead of those sunbonnets. It really begins to feel as if winter were on its way."

It was a dull gray day with a hint of snow in the air. Several flakes fell before we reached

the Harrison farm, and I pulled the laprobe aside several times to peep at the pale-green shoes with secret misgivings as to their appropriateness. The wool stockings made them such a tight fit that they pinched considerably, but the pinching was more than compensated for by the shapely appearance of my trim little feet. Besides, there was a vast amount of satisfaction in the mere knowledge that at last I was having my own way.

Under ordinary circumstances I would have looked back on that day as one of the merriest in my life. We were off to the woods with baskets and pails as soon as we were all assembled. But for once the late wild grapes hung their tempting bunches in vain. The persimmons, frost-sweetened and brown, lay under the trees unsought by my nimble fingers, and the nuts pattered down on the dry leaves unheeded. While the other children raced down the hills and whooped through the frosty hollows, I followed gingerly in their wake, picking my way through rustling leaves across the slippery logs that bridged the little brooks. It was too cold to sit still. I was obliged to keep stirring, so all that miserable afternoon I tagged after the others, painfully conscious of my fine shoes and a slave to the task of keeping them clean.

"Hi, Ann, what's the matter?" called one of the boys as he noticed me mincing along at the

tail-end of the procession instead of gallantly leading the charge. Then his glance wandered down past the sunbonnet, gingham apron and plaid dress to the cause of my leisurely gait.

"My eyes!" he exclaimed with more vigor than politeness. "What made you pull your shoes so soon for? They ain't ripe. They're green as gourds."

"Mind your own business!" was the only answer he received, but from then on what had been my greatest pride became my deepest mortification.

For some unaccountable reason after a while my feet began to burn as if they were on fire, and before the afternoon was over the pain was almost unbearable. Lottie found me on a log behind a big tree, with my arms clasped around my knees, rocking back and forth, my eyes tightly closed and my teeth clenched.

"It must be the red pepper in those stockings that burns you so," she said sympathetically. "Come on up to the house and take them off."

But I sprang up fiercely, forbidding her to mention it to anyone, and dashed into the games with a Spartan disregard of pain. It was the only way to keep from crying; and I played recklessly at prisoner's base, not stopping even when a pointed stick snagged one shoe and a sharp rock cut the other.

It was nearly dark when we went to the

"MOM BECK"

house. The boy who had said my shoes were picked too soon swung his basket over the fence and turned to help the girls. But after his unfortunate speech to me I scorned his gallantries. Scrambling to the top rail I paused an instant and then sprang lightly down. Unfortunately I had not looked before I leaped. His basket was in the way and both feet sank into a great pulpy mass of wild grapes that instantly squirted their stream of purple juice all over my light shoes. They were splotched and dyed so deeply that no amount of rubbing could ever wipe away the ugly stains. They were hopelessly ruined.

Happily, my wise mother understood that that was the worst punishment that could befall me and added no other.

Like Mary Ware, what I wore made a vast difference to me. I longed to be grown up like Lura, when she came home for vacation when she was sixteen and a half. To my eleven years she seemed a superior and a privileged being—long braids instead of bobbed hair like mine, long dresses, and the right to sit up past my bedtime. I used to try on her dresses and parade up and down in front of the mirror wishing they were mine. There was one, a pale-pink lawn made with many tucks and ruffles which I specially envied her. I envied her her clothes, her ability to play the piano and

embroider and sew so beautifully. She was attempting to make a dress for herself cut princess fashion.

It was a much beruffled affair and gave her a great deal of trouble one way and another. She was quite tired of it as it approached completion, which made her willing to listen to my proposition. I offered to work all the buttonholes down the front provided she would let me wear it the first time it was donned. It was a long and tedious undertaking, for my experience in buttonhole-making was slight, but I persevered to the end. I was determined to finish it by Thursday and wear it Thursday afternoon when I went for the weekly mail. The family laughed at me but I faced them flushed and defiant.

"Why," they asked, "do you make such a point of wearing something that doesn't fit you, that is far too old for you, out on the road where some one may see you?"

I couldn't tell them what I expected to happen, nor could I give any reason for that expectation except the flotsam and jetsam of fairy tales and the sentimental stories still in my mind from Godey's lady books.

In my day-dreams as I sewed, I saw myself in the gown which trailed elegantly on me, going along the path to the post-office in queenly fashion. And as I went, hoof-beats sounded

on the highway, and around the turn came a Prince Charming on his prancing charger. He would draw rein and speak to me, ask the way probably—and it would be the beginning of a beautiful romance. Whereas, if I went not in that new gown, he would think me only a little girl and pass on without a second glance.

It was a hot August day when I finished the buttonholes, a long row of them down the front of the dress. They almost ruined the looks of it, for some of my stitches were sprangly and I had hurried toward the end in order to finish it in time for the weekly mail.

I buttoned it up on me, slapped a hat over my bobbed hair and took the book satchel in which I carried the mail. The dress was so long it trailed slightly, and I went along, a ridiculous little figure, holding it up with a feeling of elegance quite out of keeping with my actual aspect.

The thick white dust of an August drought lay on the blackberry vines and the weeds in the fence corners. Grasshoppers skipped along the path in front of me. The heat was intense. Slowly I trailed up the lane, through the big gate out onto the public road. Past the church I went, around the corner. Nobody passed. In the post-office I lingered as long as possible. But never the sound of a hoof-beat broke the silence of the drowsy afternoon. The whole

countryside seemed asleep. All the way home I went, realizing that I had had my work for nothing. Love's labor lost. I had a feeling that fate had cheated me. But years afterward, the experience helped me to create the character of Mary Ware.

VI

MY APPRENTICESHIP

VI

MY APPRENTICESHIP

Just beyond the church was the schoolhouse, a very primitive affair. Through the wide cracks and knotholes in the floor we could see now and then a stray pig walking around. The desks were rude and clumsy with initials carved deeply in them. From the stove near the teacher's desk a stovepipe ran the length of the room to the chimney in the rear. More than one noon hour when the teacher was absent the big boys played crossing the Alps on the benches, till the stovepipe was shaken from its fastenings and came down with a bang. Then the smoke would pour out, and we would have to be given a holiday while it was being replaced.

The boys sat on one side of the room, the girls on the other, three in a seat. On the girls' side one end of the seats rested against the wall, there being no aisle there as on the other side. Pupils had to climb over each other when classes were called for recitation. Sometimes a pungent odor of mince pie or pickle would float out through the room, and heads would

turn inquiringly from the boys' side to see which one of us had dropped down out of sight behind the sheltering desk to nibble at forbidden food. We had our lunch baskets and pails with us during study hours. Both ends of the boys' desks being open, they could not refresh themselves the way the girls could.

That they were rarely caught is due to the fact that there were more wheels going round than one teacher could watch. Classes just beginning arithmetic crowded those in algebra, and the shrill reading of "Our dun cow, has she hay?" was followed by grown pupils reciting Latin. It was never monotonous, for when we tired of our own lessons we could always listen to the big scholars' recitations. Many an incident in history and many an extract from Webster's speeches or from Shakespeare's plays were learned simply by listening to the higher classes recite.

Later, the school was graded after a fashion and two teachers were hired. Then a new brick schoolhouse was built across the road with a public hall in the second story. In that hall on Washington's birthday a patriotic celebration took place every year. At these entertainments we had orations, essays, and debates, and found vent for our dramatic ability by giving dialogues which were really clever little plays. Had they been known as plays, however, they

would have been promptly frowned upon by our elders.

As a preparation for these yearly entertainments every Friday afternoon we had literary exercises. They consisted of compositions, dialogues, and a school paper. Later a society known simply as the Literary was organized. It met at night in the schoolroom. Friday afternoons were the happiest time in the week for me, and the nights the Literary met were looked forward to eagerly. Sometimes I wrote my compositions in verse.

Thursday always brought a gala-day feeling, for that was the day the weekly mail arrived. It usually came at just the time of the mid-afternoon recess, and nearly every one in school started down the road on a run to the post-office. I was sure there never was another such post-office in the United States. The mail sack was emptied into the middle of the sitting-room floor and everybody began clawing over the papers and magazines claiming his own.

Squire Mack with a little package of letters sat at the secretary in one corner of the room slowly sorting them. His hands shook and sometimes he turned a letter all the way around on all four sides in his efforts to see to whom it was addressed. A dozen sharp-eyed youngsters stood looking over his shoulder, ready to grab them. Before he could half decipher an address

one of them would reach forward shouting, "That's for me," and snatch it from his fingers.

We were always sure of Lura's weekly letter from school and the Youth's Companion, and it was always a red-letter day when the St. Nicholas arrived. Once Valentine Day fell on a Thursday and a little lace-paper valentine all the way from New Orleans gave me a thrill such as I have rarely experienced.

When I was sixteen, a publication fell into my hands called "Gems of Poetry." Scott's longer poems ran serially in it, and it had selections from all the old poets and a page devoted to some brand new ones who had not yet arrived. Albion and I each sent some verses to it. Hers were called "Rain" and mine "The Harvest." But as weeks went by without our hearing from them we concluded that they had found their way into the waste-basket.

Then one July day, one never-to-be-forgotten Thursday afternoon, as I went slowly home from the post-office, reading as I walked, I came upon both her verses and mine. Never again do I expect to feel such a thrill as the one that shot through me then. Hers had a footnote to the effect that they were written by a young lady of fourteen. Mine had "aged 16" in parentheses after my name.

We walked on air the rest of that day. To see our verses side by side with such gems as

"Marmion," "The Landing of the Pilgrims," and selections from Milton made us feel that ours were of the few "immortal names that were not born to die." The intoxication of actually seeing our verses in print sent us about with our heads in the stars for days.

It seems strange that after that little touch of success we did not try again; but although we made great plans for what we intended to do in the future, and scribbled continually, we did not seek a publisher for anything else for several years. At school and at the Literary, however, all that next year we redoubled our efforts, practising verse-making constantly. Many an autograph album is now in existence that bears testimony to that period, in our acrostics and poems of a highly didactic and sentimental nature.

The summer that I was sixteen I successfully passed the examination for a teacher's license. But sixteen was below the age limit and no license could be issued to me. At seventeen I tried it again and proceeded to get myself a school. Ignoring the proverb about the prophet in his own country, I applied for the primary room in the same district school that I had attended all my life.

The trustee made it a condition of his giving it to me, that I should obtain a certain number of signatures to a petition asking my appoint-

ment. I have no doubt now but that many a man to whom I presented my petition hesitated to sign it, feeling that I was too young and inexperienced; but with the overweening confidence of youth I visited every school patron in the district. Sometimes I trudged across plowed fields to find my man, sometimes going to his home or stopping him on the road. Every man but two in the district signed my petition.

The pupils were obedient and tractable, and I enjoyed teaching. Not until long afterward did I realize what an important part it was playing in my preparation for writing.

That November Lura was married and went to town to live. There was opportunity that winter for Albion to take art lessons in Evansville, so it was a year of change for all of us. The following year I went away to school. My father's brother, Stephen Fellows, was a professor in the State University of Iowa. He was also my guardian and I made my home with his family while in Iowa City.

I had never seen him or any of his family until I went on to school, but I had corresponded with his son, Olin, for several years. Having completed his university course, he was at home part of that winter and he made it very pleasant for me, taking me skating on the Iowa River, bringing his friends to call, and taking me to the theater. That last was a

THE BEECHES—MRS. JOHNSTON'S HOME

new experience, for up to that time I had seen very few plays.

I had an aunt living in Iowa City, and my grandmother Fellows was with her, so that for the first time I became acquainted with my father's family. From them I heard tales of their pioneer life in Illinois. They had come out from New Hampshire in wagons when my father was only three years old.

Uncle Stephen was a doctor of divinity as well as a professor of didactics, and was often called to preach in the various churches in the surrounding towns. He also gave many temperance lectures and I frequently drove with him to keep his appointments.

Uncle questioned me closely as to my methods of teaching. His classes were only for seniors, but he made arrangements to have me admitted to one of them, and there followed a study of the child mind that I found most enlightening.

The next year we went to Evansville, where Albion entered high school and I began teaching in the public schools. I had short hair which made me look much younger than my eighteen years.

Living just across the street from us were two sisters who were also ambitious to write. The four of us formed a club called the Crambo Club, and we met once a week to play Crambo.

In Crambo one is given a question and a noun. The game is to answer the question in rhyme, in a limited number of minutes, using the noun. It was good practice in versification, and often something begun in such a way was finished at leisure and brought to the next meeting.

We also wrote a novel "by Alma," the word which our initials spelled. Each member wrote a chapter in turn. Our only restriction was that we could not kill off each other's characters. The effect was spoiled somewhat by our all shying away from the chapter containing the love scenes. When my turn came I introduced an accident in order to postpone them to the next chapter.

Two of the boys who came to see us frequently were embryo writers and kept us screwed up to heights of enthusiasm. One of them asked for a copy of my poem "Apple Blossoms." He sent it to a high school paper in the East which paid for contributions, and shortly after brought me the munificent sum of seventy-five cents, my first literary earnings.

Albion finished her high school course in two years and took up stenography by herself, fitting herself to be a court reporter in a short while. I continued teaching for three years; then the nervous wear and tear became evident, and I saw that it was necessary to change my

occupation. I was teaching in my sleep harder than when I was awake. I dreamed continually of ineffectual discipline and disorder, although my classes were in reality very well behaved. The vacation after my third year of teaching I spent travelling through New England with one of my great-uncles and his wife. I had my first glimpse of the mountains and the sea. It was a wonderful experience.

Albion went into the office of our great-uncle, the Judge, and soon after I started in as private secretary for a second cousin of mine. He was in the insurance business. I took up stenography in office hours. When I had mastered it sufficiently to take his dictation, my work extended to the writing of policies and the keeping of the records. Even then there was time to scribble, and I wrote a poem called "Bob White" and sent it to Harper's Weekly. I thought I was on the road to fame and fortune when the acceptance came and a check for ten dollars.

Three years of office work was fine preparation for the work I was to do later. Two winters of that time I visited in the home of my great-uncle William and Aunt Florence. It has been my happy lot to be a member of many different households, but none so well ordered and inspiring as this. Their hospitable hearth welcomed many guests. With simple

dignity they held to all that was best in the old traditions and welcomed with broad minds all that was fine in the new. I owe them much. With such a wide circle of relatives we had little inclination to go outside of it. "Kin parties" were frequent. At such gatherings were often thirty-five or forty people numbering both grandparents and grandchildren. To keep up such a spirit of the clan when they lived in isolated country districts was one thing, but to keep it up in the midst of city distractions was quite another. And that the youngest should manifest in the oldest an affectionate interest and seek his company seems remarkable in this day.

At the end of three years I became engaged to my mother's cousin, Will Johnston, a widower with three children. About that time Albion's engagement to Hilary Bacon was announced. We planned a double wedding in the fall, but first we had to carry out another plan which we had considered since we were very small. That was to go abroad together. We had discussed it ever since the day, when studying my little primary geography, I had stuck a pin in the map of Switzerland, saying, "I am going there some day."

We joined a party and took the usual trip that tourists take, but we saw everything through the glamour of song and story. It was

during Queen Victoria's Jubilee; and when we found that the buildings for the Jubilee had been erected in Kelvin Grove it held a peculiar charm for us, because we had sung so often in our childhood, "Will ye come to Kelvin Grove, bonnie lassie, oh."

We landed in Ireland in June, when the hedges were white with hawthorn and the meadows satiny with buttercups. All through Scotland and Ireland we were continually seeing places made familiar to us by old songs. And going down the Rhine and through the Black Forest there was the continual witchery of a fair-tale background.

In Switzerland we had a warm welcome from some American cousins living there. We went to stay a week, but they kept us on one pretext and another for a month. Their homes were in the shadow of the Rigi on Lake Cham between Zurich and Lucerne. There were three brothers who were rearing their families as good Americans, with American tutors and governesses. They even sent over to America for peanuts and maple syrup. We spent some delightful days coaching along the lovely roads lined with Lombardy poplars. Cousin David was very proud of his skill in driving his four-in-hand.

On joining our party again, we found that a very delightful elderly woman from Baltimore

was still with it. She had taken us under her wing in London, had helped us choose our wedding gowns, and was with us again when we went for final fittings.

On the 11th of October we were married at Trinity Church. It was the church my father had built the last year of his life. As soon as we were established in our new home, the children came to us from Kentucky where they had been in the home of an aunt for five years. They brought with them an ardent love for Kentucky. Pewee Valley to them was only another name for Paradise. They were all three bright, beautiful children with golden curls. John, the youngest, was only seven. Through them the Land of the Little Colonel was drawing closer to me, although I did not know it then.

I had a proper audience now for the short stories I wrote about that time. I always tried them out on John and his sisters. If they squirmed during the reading, I knew the story must be changed; if they listened quietly, I knew editors would find it acceptable. The short stories I was writing then were for the Youth's Companion. I intended them just for practice. It was my ambition to write the "great American novel" some day, but it seemed as if everything conspired to keep me writing nothing but children's stories.

THE LOCUSTS—HOME OF "THE LITTLE COLONEL"

There wasn't much time for writing, however. I had many social duties and used to stop for all sorts of things, like going duck hunting with Mr. Johnston on the Ohio River. But he was a most discriminating critic, always stimulating and encouraging me. He took the greatest interest in my plots or my search for the right word.

For three years we had the happiest companionship, although the last one was a year of illness. He died in 1892. I cannot write of this time and the hard and desolate months which followed. There was a tangle of business to straighten out, caused by the long illness. When it was settled there was little left, which was a good thing in some ways. It forced me to take an interest in my surroundings and it drove me to writing in real earnest.

The children at that time were the greatest comfort. To keep them with me I busied myself in all sorts of ways. I did tutoring for several years, preparing a boy and his sister for college. I also did typewriting at home. In 1893 I published my first book, basing it on an experience of one summer when Albion and I had gone out to Iowa. We had met a carload of orphans being taken to homes in Kansas. Among them were two like Big Brother and Robin. I called the book "Big Brother."

The book was a disappointment. It was so

small and it was a child's story. Then a neighbor sent a note one day telling about a prize-offer of a thousand dollars for the story of a child living in the time of Christ. It was to be a sort of "Ben Hur" for children. I had a most particular use for that thousand dollars, the element of chance appealed to me, and even while I was reading the note the character of a boy whom I afterward called "Joel" flashed across my mind; a cripple healed of his lameness, who witnessed the miracles from a boy's viewpoint.

He stood before me, so startlingly distinct and lifelike that I was tempted to try to write the book. One thing deterred me, my inability to describe the crucifixion; but while I thought of it I seemed to see an old priest run out of the temple crying: "The veil of the temple is rent in twain." His horror seemed to transmit itself to Joel and I saw that he could witness that as the climax instead of the scene at Golgotha. By the time my room was in order, I was ready to begin the story.

It seemed as if it would be easy to write with material already provided, but with the first paragraph I realized how poorly equipped I was for writing such a story, and how appallingly little I knew of the Scriptures, although I had been a Sunday school student all my life.

I began with a market scene in Capernaum,

intending to mention the kinds of fish offered for sale along with the wild honey, grapes, butter and eggs. But I did not know what kind of fish was in the Sea of Galilee. Extensive research at the library gave the information that the Sea of Galilee abounded in fish but all the encyclopædias consulted failed to mention the kind. Finally, I found one that said catfish were plentiful and was proceeding with that when I mentioned it to a scholarly rabbi of my acquaintance.

"Don't you know," he asked, "that no Jew would eat catfish? The law forbade the use of anything without scales."

Then I wrote to a friend who was travelling in the Holy Land, and learned that the Sea of Galilee abounded in perch and carp.

Later, there came a place in the story where I spoke of a wooden doll which Joel carved for the daughter of Phineas. Again the rabbi interposed. "The law forbade. Little Jewish children had no dolls. 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth.' "

What is more natural than to introduce a dog into a boy's story? But the rabbi said no. Dogs in the East were a breed of scavengers. "Without are dogs and sorcerers and whoremongers."

Finally, with two friends I arranged to begin the study of Hebrew under the rabbi. He made the hour most illuminating. With some quotation from the Talmud or some translation from the Hebrew different from our accustomed version, he would throw such light on old customs as to make it seem that a new window had been opened. I studied hard and worked long hours, and was rewarded by having the rabbi pronounce the book correct in every detail when it was finished.

The story did not take the prize, but after the first few minutes of keen disappointment, I tied up the manuscript and started it off again. This time it was accepted immediately. Several years later, when I went to Rome, one of the first things I saw was a translation of "Joel" into Italian. It was being used in a mission school.

The careful writing of that story was an invaluable part of my apprenticeship.

VII

IN THE SLUMS AND A TRIP ABROAD

VII

IN THE SLUMS AND A TRIP ABROAD

EVER since the children had first come back from Kentucky they had talked so much of Pewee Valley that I felt acquainted with the place and the people. The girls went back every summer, and just after finishing "Joel" I went with John for a visit. It appealed to me as a most picturesque place, full of interesting characters.

I felt as if I had stepped back into a beautiful story of ante-bellum days. Back into the times when people had leisure to make hospitality their chief business in life, and could afford for every day to be a holiday; when there were always guests under the spreading rooftree of the great house, and laughter and singing in the servants' quarters.

The old Colonel came often to the house, and I saw much of his little granddaughter. She had a dreadful temper and would sometimes bang on a tree with a broom until she was red in the face, if the parrot objected to riding in her doll buggy or if any little thing displeased her. But on the other hand, she was

grace and gentleness itself, as she tiptoed around singing to the flowers and stringing words together that pleased her fancy with their beauty.

After my return to Evansville I kept thinking of her attractive little ways and of the suggestion of my hostess to put her into a story, until finally I began it. Little did I dream that it would expand into twelve volumes.

After that I was almost ready to begin my real life work—as I then regarded it—to write a "grown-up" novel, when fate and friends conspired to send me as a delegate to the International Epworth League Conference at Chattanooga. One morning we had a sunrise service up on Lookout Mountain above the clouds. It was about two o'clock in the morning when we started up by rail. Hundreds of people gathered on the brow of the mountain awaiting the appointed hour. Such billows of mist rolled up and hid the sleeping valley below that we seemed to be looking out on a boundless ocean.

There above the clouds they began to sing "Nearer, my God, to Thee." It had been suggested on the way down that I write a story for the reading course of the Epworth League; but I did not want to do it.

Suddenly, in the testimony service which followed, my attention was arrested by the

"THE LITTLE COLONEL"—MISS HATTIE COCHRAN

ringing cry, "I am a converted Jew," and in a sentence or two a man gave his experience of conversion. Afterward I had an interview with him, with a stenographer to report it.

It was a most dramatic tale. He had been cast off by his family. On the way home I decided to use the material in a book to be called "In League with Israel."

Immediately upon my return I went up to Chicago to see the secretary of the League about it, but to my disappointment found that he was out of the city and would not be back for several days. After a few minutes' conversation with his stenographer I took my leave. As I stood waiting for the elevator, she opened the door again to say something further to me, and while we stood talking the elevator came up and a gentleman stepped off. "There he is now!" she exclaimed, and introduced the secretary of the League. He had come back to town for the day to see his dentist.

If he had not had the toothache he would not have come to town, and if the stenographer had not come to the door when she did, I should have passed him never knowing who he was. On such small happenings sometimes depend important measures. We settled the matter in just a few minutes. He promised to wait six weeks, and if I finished the story by that time to read it before making his decision as to what

should be placed on the reading course of the League. So I went home and threw myself into the preparation of it. I had to do much reading and kept hard at work all day and until late at night.

At the end of six weeks it was ready. I sent it on, it was accepted, and put on the reading course of the League both in the United States and Canada. But the pace had been too hard. I barely escaped nervous prostration, and was in such a condition that a complete change and rest were prescribed for me. So I went down to Sanibel, a little island fifty miles off the west coast of Florida.

The sand there is as white as salt and the wonderful shells that strew the beach are like many colored jewels. There was a lighthouse on one end of the island and a little church on the other, where the Spanish sailors used to come and drop anchor in the shadow of its cross, as if for protection. There were constant diversions planned for the guests, and I could not have found a happier spot in which to pass a vacation.

During the writing of this last book there were often twenty boys in the house at one time. John had acquired a printing press. Starting with a little toy one, he had bartered and traded until he owned a good sized one, large enough to do real job printing. One of

the downstairs rooms had been turned over to him, and when he landed an order of any size, he had half the boys in the neighborhood in to help him. The other half came to watch and to beg a turn now and then. It was as popular as Tom Sawyer's whitewashing.

In September, 1897, we came to a turn in the road where we could see only one step ahead at a time. Rena joined Mary in Pewee Valley; I sold or stored our household goods and took John up to Highland Park to put him in the military school there. After leaving him at the school I made a short visit to some cousins in Evanston. While there, it was suggested that I write a story of the Deaconess movement. It was much like Jane Addams' work at the Hull House.

"One of the deaconesses at the home in Chicago is going away for a rest on a month's leave of absence," I was told. "Such an offer has never been made before, but under the circumstances, to gather material for a booklet which would interpret their work, I believe they would allow you to board in the home."

It seemed to be the next step for they gave me cordial admittance and the room of the absent deaconess, who was an artist. Then each day a different deaconess took me out with her on her rounds, thus giving me the opportunity of seeing the slums of a great city from many

angles, and furnishing me with the material I desired.

It was a group of earnest, consecrated women, leading lives of the greatest self-sacrifice—of such stuff as the saints are made. Every day they went out on their missions, dauntless and unafraid, and every night they came home burdened and weary to gather fresh courage and inspiration for the next day.

The first night, when I went down to the dining-room, I expected to meet a row of meek-faced black-clad women, but to my surprise it was as jolly as a boarding-school; and as I looked around on the bright faces and listened to the laughing conversation which enlivened the meal, I wondered how they could be so gay when they had been all day in such places as had been described to me.

I found my answer when we went into the large double parlors a little later. It was a cheerful place made homelike by many books and softly shaded lamps, by potted plants and a blazing fire in the open grate. One of the deaconesses sat at the piano slowly striking chords, as she waited for the different groups to settle into silence. Presently the notes of "Abide With Me" went stealing through the room and everyone took up the prayerful words.

At the conclusion Miss A., who sat in an arm-chair in the chimney-corner with the firelight

shining on her gray hair and placid face, closed her book and looked around the circle. Mother A. they called her sometimes, feeling that in truth she gave them a mother's careful oversight.

"What shall we ask for to-night, girls?" she asked. "What are our especial needs? You may begin, Emily." She nodded toward the deaconess at the piano.

"I want help for a poor family of Swedes I found to-day. The father has been out of work for three months and is nearly frantic, for he has used his last penny and several of the children are sick. I made inquiries and found that he is a first-class machinist. I promised to find him a position, so please ask that I may be guided to the right place to-morrow."

The next was a nurse deaconess. "I want help for two pretty young girls who will go straight to ruin unless they can be gotten away from the woman they live with. They are too untrained and ignorant to do the simplest kind of housework. I want to get them into an industrial school."

Miss A.'s question passed around the room and each one had some story to tell of especial need or suffering that had appealed to her during the day. For a little space there was a silence in which only the crackling of the fire was audible. Then Miss A. repeated softly as

she knelt to pray, "Cast thy burden on the Lord and he will sustain thee."

This prayer called people by their names. It asked for work for Jan Ericson and a home for the two orphaned sisters; peace for a penitent girl in the jail and hope for a grief-stricken woman whose baby had died by the hand of a drunken father. One by one she mentioned their names and gave them into the keeping of the All-merciful Father. One was thrilled by the confident trust of her asking.

A few days later I wrote in my diary: "Yesterday afternoon Miss Justin took me with her to visit in her district. There are twenty-five thousand Italians massed together in the compass of a few blocks. The streets and the doorsteps, the alleyways and passages of the big tenement houses were literally swarming with children. Some of them with their olive complexions and big dark eyes were as beautiful as any the old masters ever used as models. The whole district was as distinctly foreign in its atmosphere as if some little Italian town had been picked up bodily and set down in the midst of our American civilization."

The speech, the faces and even the smells were foreign, for every family seemed to be concocting some mixture of tomatoes and red peppers. One house which we entered had a family living in each room, and was built in

such a way that the halls had not a window, a transom, or even a pane of skylight to let in the day. When the doors of the rooms were closed the hall was in total darkness. We groped our way up the stairs with a creepy feeling that we might encounter almost any kind of horror. Under our feet we could feel the deep hollows in the steps that had been worn there by the tramp of its many tenants year after year.

When we reached the upper hall we had to feel our way forward by touching the grimy walls. Somewhere in the darkness ahead of us a dog was evidently chained, for we could hear the chain clank down at the end of the passage and then a succession of fierce hoarse barks. Nobody but Dickens could adequately describe that scene so that your hair would stand up as mine did then. Miss Justin stopped and called out something in Italian. Then a door opened halfway down the hall, sending out a stream of light that revealed the dirtiest place I had ever been in. It made me gasp and draw my skirts several inches higher.

Then we saw the animal that was barking at us, a villainous-looking red-eyed bulldog, chained to his owner's door-knob to protect the room in his absence.

It would take pages to tell of the other places we visited, up rickety outside stairs, down into moldy basements, back in the rear

of reeking saloons, and the sights we saw. It will not do to begin, for they were all pitiful, and some made me heartsick. They were too shameful to repeat. We tramped until dark, and then went into a more respectable part of town where we could find a clean restaurant in which to get our supper. Afterward we went back to the room where Miss Justin had taught a night-school for five years without a week's vacation, coming through cold or heat, wind or snow. She never stopped on account of the weather a single night.

When she had locked the door behind us, lighted the lamp and stirred the fire in the stove, she told me the story of some of her boys.

"Two of them have a broom factory in the basement under this room," she said. "They were ignorant little mischief-makers when they first came to us; all they came for was to be amused. That punching-bag between the doors, the swing in the back room, and several games we played drew them. Five years ago they were in a fair way to fill a cell in the penitentiary, simply because that was the easiest course open to them. Now I know no manlier young men anywhere. They keep steadily at work, have opened a little bank account and are respected by every one who knows them."

She told me about several, and while we were

talking one of them entered and began to arrange the chairs. In a little while about thirty young men and boys had gathered in the room and she gave them a singing lesson. They seemed to enjoy it immensely.

After short devotional exercises she divided them into classes as well as she could, setting the more advanced pupils to helping the younger ones and going from group to group herself doing the work of at least three teachers. For awhile she kept me busy explaining long division to a poor fellow who had stumbled over it so many nights he was almost discouraged. Then I helped a grammar class, hopelessly tangled in some irregular verbs, and then I heard a bright-eyed boy read several pages. They were all so grateful and so eager to learn that I could have gone on teaching all night. I was amazed, when Miss Justin tapped the bell, to find that it was ten o'clock.

Several of the boys walked over to the street-car with us, although Miss Justin was not afraid to go to any part of the city any time of night. She said her white ties were as much protection to her as a policeman's badge.

Another day I wrote in my diary: "This morning we went to a kindergarten where were fifteen children who had never seen a tree. They live in the crowded tenement districts too far away from the parks and the respect-

able parts of town to walk to them, and they are too poor to pay street-car fare. A butterfly is a thing of absorbing interest to them and a bird's nest the greatest of curiosities."

"They think they are playing," said the deaconess, as the little girls began their bed-making song. "But in reality they are going through a training that will make them efficient housemaids and cooks. We could not go into their homes and say to their slovenly mothers: 'You must air your beds and sweep the corners of your rooms and keep your cooking vessels clean,' but these children can; and they practise at home what we teach them here with an energy that often produces an amazing revolution."

At noon the children went trooping out carrying away in each little heart a talisman to help charm away the baleful influence of streets and cellars; a tiny one it is true, but far more potent than one might imagine—the memory of one perfectly happy morning lived in an atmosphere of cleanliness and sunshine and song.

Toward the close of the month I wrote home: "I wonder if there is anything in church or state or among any class of people that this work does not touch in one of its manifold branches. There are phases of the work, in the jails and hospitals, of which I have never written.

As for the stories that have been told me, and the woeful sights I have seen myself, it would take a whole volume to give an adequate description of just this one month."

I now had ample material for the little book, "Where the White Ties Lead," and was beginning to consider what I should do next, when I had a telegram from Aunt Florence asking me to meet her in Oconomowoc. I knew she was there visiting some relatives, but could not imagine why she should summon me to join her. However, I knew she would not do it without some good reason, so I took the next train.

It was to a beautiful home on a wooded island that the message called me. I found that my hosts wanted someone to take their eighteen-year-old daughter, Eleanor, abroad; and Aunt Florence had suggested me. I stayed there several days talking the matter over with them, and finally decided to accept their offer. Indeed, it seemed as if Providence had closed every other road to me and had opened up this one. It was the only thing left to do.

Having made up my mind to go abroad, I told John goodbye and set out for Evansville and Pewee Valley to see the rest of my family. On the fifth of November, 1897, I started to Chicago to join Eleanor. Her father had arranged our itinerary. He wanted her to spend

the first few months studying near Tours. In New York just before sailing, she gave a house party at the hotel, entertaining some of her former schoolmates. Her brother came down from Yale to see us off. She was much larger than I and immediately gave me the nickname of "Babe."

Our trip across was nothing out of the ordinary and after a few days in Paris we went on to Tours. From there we found our way to a villa across the Loire and beyond the old walled village of St. Symphorium. It was kept by Madame Chevrail, the wife of a retired professor. She took a few boarders to insure her the luxuries of life, she said. Cousin Nell had spent several months with her and recommended the place so highly that we were eager to obtain board there.

She gave us a cordial welcome for Nell's sake. She had with her an English boy and his tutor, but as they were going to leave soon she agreed to take us at once.

The house was almost hidden behind a high brick wall and a row of lime trees. The windows looked out on a garden where chrysanthemums were in bloom. There was a maze in the garden and a statue of Adam looked across at a statue of Eve. Also there were enormous glass bells under which lettuce and other greens were growing.

Our rooms were heated by blazing grate-fires, and there was an open grate in the dining-room, where fires were built up at meal-time. But Madame scorned fires herself. She went about wearing two coats and wiping a nose which was purple with cold.

There were only two servants, Rosalie and Gabriel, but they accomplished wonders. I have never anywhere eaten such dainty and delicious viands as Rosalie sent to the table day after day. Madame was a wonderful housekeeper and we blessed the kind fates that had brought us to her keeping. She spoke broken English and was glad of an opportunity to practise it. It was a rule of old Monsieur's that nothing but French could be spoken at his table, but Madame broke the rule continually to talk with me. His curiosity was so great that he would become very cross and impatient because he could not understand.

He could say only one sentence in English, and he said it even if it were pouring rain: "It ees a nice day."

Eleanor immediately began French lessons with him. As we were in the heart of the châteaux-district, we planned various excursions to the different châteaux. We frequently walked into Tours across the bridge that spanned the Loire.

There was a house very near the villa where

we lived that I decided to use in a story sometime: I called it the "Gate of the Giant Scissors" because over the gate in the high brick wall was a medallion bearing an enormous pair of scissors. On each gable of the house was a similar medallion with a pair of scissors. Madame said that the man who built it was named Ciseaux, and that he was very peculiar. The present owner did not live in it but left it to a caretaker the year round. One day when Gabriel drove us in the pony cart to vespers we passed the gate and I had a glimpse of an old man in wooden shoes.

It gave me an idea for a story, and next day I sent to Tours for a photographer to come out and take a picture of the gate.

As Christmas drew near, Eleanor confessed she was getting dreadfully homesick. She had always been used to a big family and big preparations for the day. So in order to give her something to think about, I asked Madame if she knew any children for whom we could prepare a tree. I had in mind about ten, but Madame entered into it so heartily that she invited a whole school of thirty children to our Christmas celebration.

For many days we were very busy dressing dolls, making candy bags and shopping for toys. We had no popcorn. Madame had never seen any, but she said if we had thought in time

VILLA WHERE "THE GIANT SCISSORS" WAS WRITTEN

we could have ordered some from Paris grocers.

Monsieur gave us a lovely bough of mistletoe. It was covered with waxen beads like pearls. At five o'clock the children began to come. Gabriel furnished the music on his accordion, and they all filed into the room, thirty of them, after marching down the garden paths between rows of blooming laurel. They stood around the room bewildered at first, for none of them had ever seen such a sight before: a tree that glittered and sparkled and shone, that bore stars and rainbows and gay toys. At first they only drew deep wondering breaths and looked at each other with shining eyes.

"My little daughter never had anything like that in her life," said one grateful mother, as Eleanor put a doll in the child's arms. "She'll never forget this to her dying day. Nor will any of us, dear mademoiselle. We knew not what it was to have so beautiful a Noel."

When the last toy had been stripped from the branches it was our turn to be surprised. At a signal from Madame the children began circling around the tree, singing a song the Sisters at the school had taught them for the occasion. It was a happy little song about the green pine tree, king of all trees and monarch of the woods because of the crown he yearly wears at Noel. At the close, every child came

up to say "Thank you, Madame" and "Good-night."

Gabriel's accordion led them out again and the music, growing fainter and fainter, died away in the distance; but in every heart that heard it had been born a memory whose music could never be lost, the memory of one happy Christmas. And to me had been given a whole chapter for my new book.

VIII

AN AUTHOR'S PERSONAL REWARDS

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DECEMBER 26. Madame is a good soul. On Thursdays the bell at the gate rings all day long. A constant stream of beggars files by. There is soup and black bread for everyone who wants it, and a few centimes for each one who applies for aid. She says the church in this district takes care of the very poor, but the ladies have an organization for relieving the better class. Clothes too fine for peasants are put in perfect order and given to governesses and people who are too proud to accept aid unless it is offered with great tact. They send the Tours box to Bordeaux and the Bordeaux box to Tours in order that the recipients need not be embarrassed by meeting the former wearer of their garments.

January 2. Epiphany Sunday we had the cake of the king at dinner. Monsieur got the doll in the cake and chose me for queen. After dinner Madame entertained us with stories of her convent days when she stuck pins into little wax figures which she named after the nuns she did not like.

January 16. Madame took us with her today when she went to the Little Sisters of the Poor to see Sister Denisa de la Providence. She came here from Cincinnati fourteen years ago. She has such a happy face, as if she finds some joy in her work of caring for the old people. She took us first into the old men's hall. There were two hundred of them. Most of them were playing cards. Upstairs some of them were out on the gallery with their pipes. They seemed so fond of Sister Denisa. She moved some of them aside with a "Pardon, petit père." Upstairs were the dormitories, fresh and clean, with patchwork quilts on the beds.

In the women's room the old people were reading or gazing vacantly into space. Marquise, Countess, Baroness, all were there. More than half the inmates had at one time been wealthy people. One was sick in bed. She was eighty-nine years old. The tears streamed down her face, not because she did not have the necessities of life, but because she was herded with so many poor unfortunates, away from home and kindred.

On the way home Madame suggested another chapter for my "Gate of the Giant Scissors" story. So did Sister Denisa.

During the time we were with Madame Chevrail we made many excursions, visiting all the noted châteaux in that vicinity. We

also went again to see Sister Denisa, taking her a pot of pink hyacinths and some money. We came to feel very much at home in the old house behind the lime trees, and fell into a pleasant routine of French lessons, writing letters, reading and walking in to Tours to call on some American friends we made there. Part of the time I was at work on the manuscript of a short story, which made the days fairly fly.

On the ninth of February we went to Paris. Madame accompanied us to visit her son. We felt that we were parting from an old and very dear friend when she left us. We immediately began a round of sight-seeing. An artist friend of Eleanor's from Chicago came and took us to some life classes in the Latin quarter. As we left the studio she told us of the news that had just come that morning of the wreck of "The Maine."

We left Paris after Mardi Gras and went to Genoa. We drove all around the beautiful old town in a victoria. The houses climb high up on the hill. The journey from there to Rome was a perpetual delight. On one side were the snow-capped mountains, on the other the beach with the blue Mediterranean stretching away in the sun. Sometimes we glimpsed it through the green olive groves or the orange trees that hung so full of yellow fruit.

In Rome we found Cousin Nell studying Italian and helping with a girl's school. It seemed so good to come across some of the family in this strange place. They say the sun never sets on England's possessions. I can say with equal truth the sun never sets on my cousins.

The first morning Nell drove with us we crossed the bridge over the Tiber. She told us it was one built in the same place where Horatius stood "in the brave days of old." It made it vastly more interesting to have Nell pilot us around. For nearly a month we went sight-seeing religiously: churches, palaces, galleries, the catacombs, the Pincian Hill, the Vatican. As it was the usual routine followed by tourists, it has been described too many times for me to repeat it here.

In March we went to Naples. Our view from the windows was a beautiful one. Bag-pipes and hand-organs echoed down the streets. Donkey carts and carriages and throngs of pedestrians passed. The sunset on the water was glorious. Little boats darted back and forth in the green and purple tinged waves. The blue, blue sky was filled with pink and white fleecy clouds, and Capri shone like an amethyst in the purple haze that veiled it. The fishermen leaned over the wall and dipped their lines into the water. They were the only quiet

figures in the whole scene of surging priests and peasants and soldiers and pleasure-seekers.

From Naples we went to Pompeii, and from there to Cava, where we spent the night. The next morning we were off before nine o'clock in a carriage with a one-eyed driver who wore earrings. He also wore an evil look, as if he would as soon stick a stiletto into one's back as not.

We had two tough little horses that started down the road in fine style. In a little while we reached the sea, and our way from then on wound through unsurpassed beauty. The sea on our left, the mountains on our right covered with lemon trees, myriads of them, weighted down with fruit. Now and then there was a whiff of orange blossoms and all sorts of sweet, spicy, wild things mingling with a breath of the sea.

About fifteen minutes before we reached our destination the rain poured so fast that we had to have our carriage closed. It was still pouring when we reached Amalfi. But we climbed the steps all the way up to the Hotel Cappuccine. It used to be a monastery. Now the cells are converted into bedrooms, and the hotel washing is hung in the beautiful little cloister. Roses and lemons and oranges made the garden sweet, but we could not walk about because of the rain.

There was a fire in the drawing-room so we dried our clothes, and after lunch we had to go on to Sorrento. From Sorrento we took a boat back to Naples. Then back to Rome for another week and on to Florence.

The day before Easter we shopped until noon and then joined the great crowds in front of the cathedral. A sort of pagoda, gaily decorated, stood in the square on a wagon drawn by four white oxen, garlanded with flowers. Just before the bells chimed noon, a procession of priests filed into the cathedral, each one bearing a tall lighted candle. As the hour struck, a dove was shot along a string from the high altar to the pagoda and returned to the altar without a hitch in the performance. The country people took it as a good omen and went home rejoicing over the prospect of a fine harvest.

We visited Venice in the dark of the moon. It rained nearly all the time we were there. In Geneva, where we stayed a while, I was piling up material to be used later in "The Little Colonel's Hero," although I did not know it at the time.

Back in Paris we heard wild rumors that the first shots of the war had been fired, that a United States boat had captured a Spanish vessel and that a Spanish fleet had started in pursuit of "The Paris."

I was impatient to get back to the States, but we still had much of our itinerary to traverse. Eleanor was especially anxious not to miss the coaching in the English Lake region. So we waited for that.

We were disappointed in not getting to old Chester. I happened to mention it to a lady who had her steamer chair on the deck beside mine. I asked her if she had seen God's Providence House, and found that her husband's family had once owned it. During a plague which swept the town this family was spared. Afterward they had carved over the door, "God's providence is mine inheritance." It became the family motto and she showed it to me engraved in her wedding ring. Afterward, I used the incident in a story called "Mildred's Inheritance."

I had made arrangements for John to stay at the school until my arrival which was after Commencement, and we went to Kentucky together. In August he went to work for the Louisville Paper Company, and I finished the "Gate of the Giant Scissors" and sent it to my publishers.

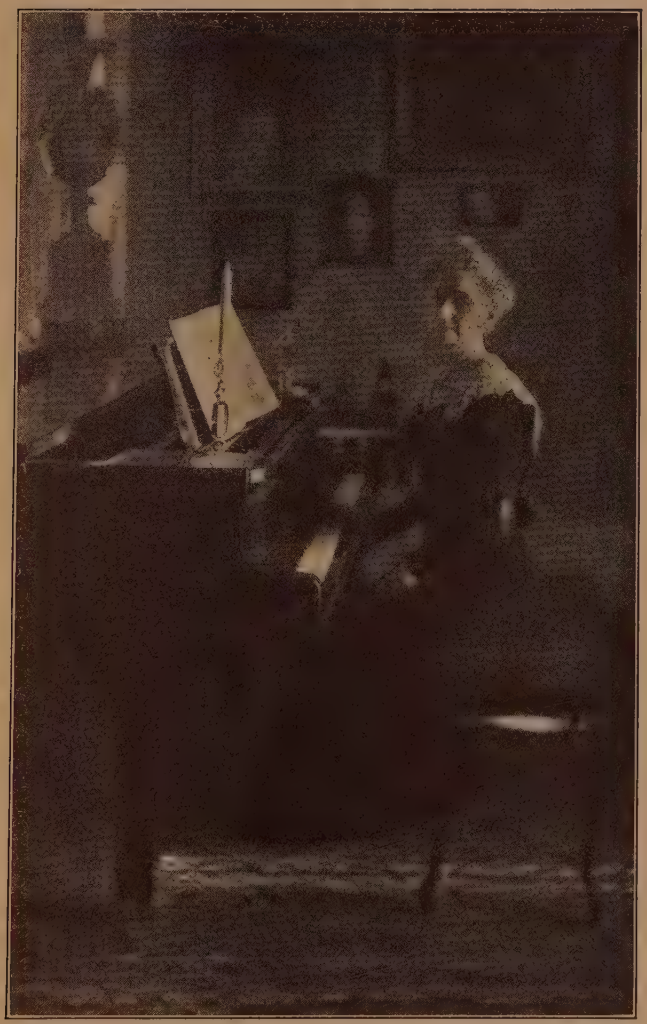
That summer our little Author's Club came into being. Evelyn Snead Barnett proposed it. She was spending the summer at the Inn in Pewee Valley. George Madden Martin and Eva Madden were living in the valley then, and

the four of us used to meet with Miss Allison to discuss methods of writing. It was always a little club, never more than seven or eight, but later on it numbered the author of "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" and the "Lady of the Decoration" among its members; also Abby McGuire Roach, Mary F. Leonard, Margaret Vandercook, Margaret Steele Anderson, and Ellen Semple. Each of them has one book to her credit and some of them many more. Later, Eleanor Mercein Kelly joined us.

After that summer we met in Louisville once a week for over twenty years. At the meetings the members took turns reading a manuscript, which was duly criticized. In all that time I never knew of one of the members getting her feelings hurt, for we took the criticisms gladly and profited by them.

At one time this was given to the Club to work out: "A well bred young lady in a barber shop at midnight. How did she get there and how did she get out?" Each one told a different tale. The Black Cat magazine took them all and devoted one entire number to the collection of tales.

We always had some sort of frolic every year. The tie that bound us was a very strong one and our friendship was deeply rooted. The memory of it is one of my most cherished possessions.



"MISS ALLISON"—MISS FANNY CRAIG

That winter after my return from abroad, the days were very full. I wrote all morning, then there were long walks in the afternoons and constant exchange of visits with the neighbors. In the evenings, if nobody dropped in, I read aloud to John. There were several picnics in the snow, and luncheons and teas almost every day.

The following summer I wrote "Two Little Knights of Kentucky." It was suggested by a picture I had seen of two of Miss Fanny Craig's nephews, handsome aristocratic little fellows. I took Miss Fanny for the Miss Allison of the story, and located the scene at her place. I had seen a trained bear tramping through the country with its trainer the winter before. Jonesy was straight from the Chicago slums.

September brought us a great sadness. Rena was taken very ill on the sixth with appendicitis. She died on the twelfth after an operation. Her death made us all the more anxious about John's health.

A visit from Cousin Olin, who was located in New York, resulted in John's going to Walton, New York, for a year, where he had a position which kept him out of doors, driving around the country. Just before Christmas I joined him in Walton and stayed with him till the following autumn. Then we went back to Kentucky again and the specialist who

examined him said he must go immediately to Arizona.

So once more I packed my trunk and started West with him. We went to Lee's ranch near Phoenix where we lived in tents all winter. The ranch was devoted to the care of invalid boarders. John was so much better that he could go hunting. I rented a little shack on the edge of the desert, just across the alfalfa field from the rows of tents, and fitted it up for my workshop. There I went every morning to write. I wrote the "Little Colonel at Boarding School" that winter.

In May it was so hot that we had to make a change, so we went first to California, then to Comfort, Texas, and out to another ranch for invalid boarders. My chief diversion that summer was poling a flat-bottomed boat up and down the creek.

In the fall Mary came out to take my place and I went to Evansville for the winter. While there I wrote the "Little Colonel in Arizona," which includes "In the Desert of Waiting." That allegory of old Camelback Mountain was suggested by a remark of one of the boys at Lee's ranch: "It's just like us, broken down and left to die on the sands." But it seemed to me it must have some message of hopefulness and I began a search for a legend about it. I finally made up an allegory to suit myself.

When I found that teachers down in Mexico had translated it into Spanish for their classes, that it has been done in braille for the blind, and that it has been translated into Japanese and brought out over there in a little book, I was glad that I had taken that liberty with old Camelback Mountain. That fall I joined John and Mary in San Antonio, and we kept house there till the following June. John had grown so much better that he was travelling for a wholesale paper house, but was taken violently ill in May and we had to take him to the hill country. We went back to Comfort for a while and then moved to Boerne where I bought a place that we called Penacres. Boerne is the Bauer of "Mary Ware in Texas," and many of her experiences were ours first.

John was the bravest invalid I ever knew. He would be so ill we could scarcely expect him to live, and in a few days he would be up and about, interested in a thousand things. It was not long before he knew everybody in town and every one was his friend. He did a big wholesale business in armadillo-shell baskets, keeping men out in the hills all the time catching armadillos, and making the baskets by wiring the heads and tails of the shells together.

He bought all sorts of wild animals, from Mexican mountain lions to Gila monsters, and

sold them again to zoos, after he had kept them a while to study their ways. Joseph, the wolf, who loved watermelon, and Crazy Liz, the coyote, were two of his pets. And he had a darling little wild-cat, much more playful than a domestic kitten. He kept a man busy attending to the various animals and shipping them. He had an enormous correspondence.

We lived nearly eight years in Texas, and I wrote a book each year. Much of my writing was done at John's bedside. I thought of him whenever I wrote of Jack Ware, and he was my inspiration for "The Jester's Sword." "*And it came to pass wherever he went men felt a strange strength-giving influence radiating from his presence. One could not say exactly what it was, it was so fleeting and intangible, like warmth that circles from a brazier or perfume that is wafted from an unseen rose. . . . So blithely did he bear his lot it seemed a kingly spirit dwelt among us, and earth is poorer for his going.*"

Boerne had been settled by Germans, and a number of the outlying ranches were occupied by delightful English and Scotch families. We came to know some of them intimately, and ceased to feel like strangers in a strange land. When I hear various parts of the country boasting of their hospitality, I feel that nothing can exceed Texas hospitality. Nobody could be

MARY JOHNSTON IN HER GARDEN

dearer than the friends we made in San Antonio and Boerne.

After John's death it was so lonely at Penacres that we came back to Kentucky to live. We have been back in the valley now for seventeen years. Life is intensely interesting wherever Mary is, because she makes it so. She is an artist, a wonderful gardener, and the dearest daughter anybody ever had.

She made some of the illustrations in the original "Little Colonel" book and designed the first Paper Doll book. It is through her unselfishness that I have had leisure to write. I drew upon some of her experiences in creating Joyce Ware.

We found many changes in Pewee Valley. The boarding-school had burned down and several dwelling-houses had been erected on what was once the college campus. The cabin where Gay spent a summer and the Haunted House of Hartwell Hollow had also burned to the ground. Oak Lea had been sold and its new owner had cut down all the beautiful oak trees that gave the place its name.

The Little Colonel no longer lived in the valley. She had married Albert Dick and moved to Louisville. She still lives there and has two little sons. Clovercroft is left untouched by time and change, and so is Miss Allison's home.

Several summers spent on Cape Cod gave me

material for "Georgina of the Rainbows" and "Georgina's Service Stars," but I have never found the time to begin on what was always my dream, the grown-up novel. I have ceased to care about that, however, and this is the reason:

One day on the street-car a lady introduced herself to me and said: "I want you to know about my little daughter. I thought it might be an inspiration to you. She was playing about the excavations for a new building one day, and fell between the timbers. In falling she cut the tip of her tongue almost off and it had to have several stitches taken in it. Her nose had been injured also, so that she could not take an anesthetic, so we had to think of some way to induce her to sit perfectly still. When asked what she would take to do that she said: 'The new "Little Colonel" book and all the others of the set that I haven't got yet.' And when we brought them, she sat through that painful operation without a whimper—like a little stoic."

When I heard that, I asked myself: "Would any grown person have sat through that painful operation comforted by any of the six best sellers, or by anything written by Thackeray, George Eliot, or Dickens? You'd better stick to your audience of loyal, loving children, than fly to others that you know not of."

The greatest thing, of course, that my work has brought me is the friendship of such a host of children and young people. The dear little letters! Hundreds come drifting in from all parts of the country till it is impossible to send personal replies. I can send only a printed slip in answer, although I long to let each one know how much it means to me to be counted in as a "real sure enough friend," as one girl expressed it, "who knows just how we feel about things."

The young folks have shared their own good times with me so loyally that my letter-box reminds me of the swineherd's magic kettle. Looking into it I cannot tell what everybody in the kingdom is having for breakfast, but I can tell what they found in their Christmas stockings, and how they spent their vacations at seashore and mountain resorts, in farm-houses or inland villages. And I know what per cent many of them made in their examinations, what their ambitions are, and what good times they are having from kindergarten to high school, not only in this country but sometimes in India and Japan, and some of the islands of the sea.

Sometimes it seems as if the whole world must be full of happy, ambitious young people, who not only work and play with a zest but who even "dream valiantly." To feel that one

has a part in making such conditions, in starting these ripples which go on and on in ever widening circles, is a happiness that cannot be estimated. It was a delightful surprise to me when I heard of the first club formed as a result of the Little Colonel's "Order of Hildegarde." Now they are scattered all over the United States, and I often receive letters from those who say they have been saved from some girlish foolishness by the warning of the Three Weavers, and are making their standards those of the Silver Yardstick.

And the Tusitala rings! I wish I might see in one long row all the little hands from New England to the Philippines that have written me that they are wearing a ring like Betty's and Lloyd's as a reminder of the road of the loving heart they are trying to leave behind in the world's memory. Some of them belong to college girls, and some of them to tiny folk not yet "allowed to use ink."

Quite as many perhaps have begun to string a rosary of pearls, trying to keep tryst with each day's duty as Edryn did when he heard the King's call. I have been deeply touched by their confessions and confidences, and happy to know that the stories have left in their wake a quickening of unselfish impulses and a desire to be of service.

"I don't lose my temper half as often now

that I am trying to be like Lloyd," writes one.

"Betty and Lloyd have made a great change in our household," says a greatly tried governess. "The children are much easier to manage since they have taken to impersonating the characters they love."

It is good to hear of the charitable work started by the play of the Princess Winsome, which has been given in many places. One group of boys and girls in a New York town reported it had netted them two hundred and fifty dollars for the local hospital.

It is a gratification to know that the various characters have become so endeared to their readers that they count them as warm personal friends. To be sure, it often becomes annoying when a letter contains six or seven pages of closely written questions, insisting on knowing what became of everything and everybody, even to Mary Ware's handkerchief which she dropped in the Arizona schoolroom hoping for a romantic adventure. The writers do not seem to realize that many of the characters and incidents are purely imaginary, but insist on having their curiosity satisfied, just as if the happenings were in real life.

The few places that are real have had many pilgrimages made to them. The Locusts, The Beeches (the home of General Lawton's family), Clovercroft, and the Haunted House of Hart-

well Hollow have drawn a number of enthusiastic young tourists to this part of Kentucky. Several have found their way to Arizona, to Lee's ranch and Camelback Mountain. One of these was a young fellow who, as a small boy, used to send me designs for menu cards and costumes for his little friends' dolls (all named after characters in the stories). He also sent a paper he edited for the same dolls, the society columns being filled with their sayings and doings.

The most gratifying of these pilgrimages was one made by a little New York girl in France. While in Tours she found the Gate of the Giant Scissors and went several times to the home of the Little Sisters of the Poor. This is an account she gave of her last visit there:

"Mother, Jack and I gave the old people a treat of tobacco and snuff, candy, sugar, and cakes in your honor. They were delighted, and we left the old men smoking and sneezing and the old women munching their candies. They all sent you a special 'God bless you.' "

Some of the things I am told are most amusing. One little girl in a convent confided that her dearest wish was to be an authoress or a *saint*, she had not quite decided which. One child of tender years was writing a novel called "The Passion of a Life"; and a little eight-year-old, coining nouns to suit herself,

CAMELBACK MOUNTAIN

gravely informed me that I was her favorite "authorine."

One winter afternoon in a country neighborhood where I was visiting, as I was coming out of church from a vesper service, a sweet-faced stranger approached me. "I want you to know," she began hesitatingly, "I was visiting in Virginia last summer and met a little girl who, because of your books, counts you as one of her dearest friends. She never forgets to put your name in her prayers every night."

Again I asked myself the question: "Would one of the six best sellers have brought me such a reward?" and I no longer regretted that I had not achieved a grown-up novel.

Sometimes when I look at the insignificant pile of books which bear my signature, and then think of the responses they have called forth, I feel somewhat of the same awe that must have stirred the heart of that lad of Galilee when he found his few small loaves and fishes feeding a multitude. And then I remember that his miracle and mine were wrought in the selfsame way. Only because his offering was put into the Master's hand was it multiplied. No page that I have ever written was begun without a prayer that it might thus be taken, blessed and used.

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